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EU 'profoundly indignant' at massacre

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The European Union (EU) expressed its "profound indignation" here Saturday at the Hebron massacre, and said Israel bore responsibility for protecting residents of the occupied territories. The EU issued a statement calling for a "full and immediate" inquiry into the shootings. But it appealed to all parties not to let the "tragic events" undermine or delay the Middle East peace process. "The European Union calls upon the parties to refuse to allow themselves to be drawn into a spiral of violence." EU European affairs ministers said in the statement. "While noting that the events have been condemned by the Israeli government, the EU holds that the authorities in the occupied territories must take full responsibility for protecting the inhabitants," it said. The president of the EU council of foreign ministers, Greece's Theodoros Pangalos, quoted Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat as saying that the attack could not have been carried out by one lone gunman. He quoted Mr. Arafat as saying in a letter to the EU that Israeli troops had fired on people escaping from the mosque, purportedly to stop the killer escaping.

'Clinton to host Rabin-Arafat summit'

TEL AVIV (AP) — The Clinton administration has invited Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to a summit within the next few days in Washington, and Mr. Rabin has accepted/Israel Television reported Saturday. A spokesman for Mr. Rabin denied the report, saying the only invitation out of Washington was to lower-level peace negotiators to resume the talks. The TV report said the United States wants the two to meet to calm the region after a Jewish settler opened fire inside a mosque in Hebron on Friday, killing at least 60 worshippers. The report, citing sources close to Mr. Rabin, said he was ready to accept the invitation, but was waiting to hear from Mr. Arafat before formally announcing his intention to go. It quoted Mr. Rabin as saying, "I'm ready to got to Washington at any time." The report added that Mr. Rabin expected Mr. Arafat to agree. Mr. Rabin's spokesman, Gad Ben-Ari, said Israel was ready to send its delegation to the peace talks to Washington this week. "The invitation is to get negotiations moving again," Mr. Ben-Ari said denying any mention of a Rabin-Arafat summit.

Massacre casts gloom over Mideast

Protests and demand for world action heard from Arab capitals

Israelis kill three more; violence erupts in Jaffa, rally held in Nazareth

By combined agency dispatches

ISRAELI SOLDIERS shot and killed three Palestinian teenagers Saturday amid widespread protests across the occupied territories a day after a settler massacred at least 60 Palestinians in a Hebron mosque.

The people of Hebron defied a curfew to mourn their dead and reacted stoically to news Israeli soldiers had killed three more Arabs in protests against the mosque massacre. Every neighbourhood in the town of 110,000 was dotted with rows of plastic stools for mourners, who passed from house to house to offer condolences to the families who lost relatives in Friday's slaughter at the Cave of the Patriarchs and its aftermath.

Soldiers and armed Jewish settlers patrolled the narrow streets to enforce a curfew but they did not break up the Palestinian wakes.

The settlers were supposed to be confined by the army to their five settlements in the Hebron area but they walked with Uzi sub-machineguns alongside soldiers.

Protests against the killings continued in the occupied territories and spread to the Arab towns of Jaffa and Nazareth inside Israel on Saturday.

At least 70 people have died since immigrant American doctor Baruch Goldstein sprayed bullets at Palestinians at prayer early on Friday. The massacre and ensuing clashes were the worst day of bloodshed in Israel's 27-year-old occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Israel TV reported an army investigation found that two Israeli soldiers fired their weapons inside the mosque when they thought a colleague was in trouble and may have been responsible for some of the deaths. (see separate story)

Questions about army involvement fuelled fury over Friday's attack as troops killed three Palestinian teenagers and wounded more than 50 Arabs, two of them reported in critical condition, in widespread clashes throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip Saturday.

Protests spread to Arab areas in Israel for the first time since the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising in December 1987.

Thousands of Israeli Arabs marched in the streets and threw stones at police who answered with tear-gas and shots in the air.

In Tel Aviv's Jaffa district, hundreds of Arabs attacked Jews, smashed the windows of Jewish stores and burned cars. In Nazareth, 3,000 protesters marched with placards calling for Israel to "disarm settlers and enforce the law." Some stoned the police station.

Israeli curfews were enforced across the occupied territories in a vain effort to contain the protests.

But the government was reported to be preparing to outlaw Kach, the anti-Arab group to which gunman Goldstein

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A Palestinian youth throws a tear-gas grenade back to Israeli soldiers at the Shawfat refugee camp in East Jerusalem during heavy clashes on Saturday (AFP photos)

PLO: No U.S. talks unless demands met

Kaddoumi calls for international protection for Palestinians, dismantling of settlements

TUNIS (Agencies) — A senior Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official said there could be no peace talks with Israel in Washington unless international protection was guaranteed to Palestinians in the occupied territories and Jewish settlements were dismantled.

"Continuing negotiations is now impossible," PLO's foreign affairs chief Farouk Kaddoumi said in a statement.

The PLO made its demands after the massacre of Palestinians in a Hebron mosque by one or more Jewish settlers on Friday. Israeli officials have already rejected the conditions.

Commenting on President Bill Clinton's invitation to resume talks in Washington, (see page 2), Mr. Kaddoumi said: "Transporting negotiations is not enough. This invitation to

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Jordan shares grief, remains steadfast in support — King

His Majesty urges lawmakers to rise above disputes and personal clashes

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein said Saturday Jordan shared the grief of the Palestinians over the Hebron massacre and reaffirmed the Kingdom's snpport for the Palestinians' struggle to regain their land and rights.

"We are a united family, sharing the grief, the pain and the sadness covered by the dastardly crime — the ugliest that could be imagined, a crime that was committed at dawn Friday at Al Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron this Holy Month of Ramadan," King Hussein said.

"We would like to stress here that we stand by our brethren in the Israeli-occupied Arab lands not in these moments alone but in every moment of our life, supporting their steadfastness, their perseverance and their attachment to their land and their defence of their right. We are confident that they will come out victorious at the end," King Hussein said during a visit to Khalil Al Rahman Society in Amman where he offered his condolences over the death of the worshippers in the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron.

"We stand with our brothers in these difficult circumstances as they face this crucial test and in their suffering. We back their efforts with all our potentials and express solidarity with our brothers and the relatives of the martyrs and the wounded in the Hebron massacre," he said.

"When we used to discuss the subject of holy places, calling for religious rule over Islamic holy places, our call was sincere and responsible," the King said.

"The series of tragic events since the burning of the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem (in 1968), the subsequent desecration of the Islamic and Christian holy places and finally Friday's massacre only provide a clear indication that our demand is right and that we should continue to demand that sovereignty over the holy places should be that of God alone, to ensure the right of worshipping for those who can provide protection to the holy shrines," the King said.

King Hussein called on the public to deal with this event with "vision and reason and determination" to control their temper more than any time in the past.

He also called for unity

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Deputies condemn Israel, urge Arab-Islamic action

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament Saturday strongly condemned "the ugly massacre committed by the Zionist authorities through its settlers" against Palestinian worshippers in the Cave of Patriarchs in Hebron on Friday and urged international protection for Palestinians in the occupied territories.

"As it condemns this crime and the conspiracy of the Israeli occupation forces with the settlers as well as the conspiracy of the hegemonous forces with the occupation, the (House) declares that it is time for Arab awakening," the deputies said.

"Statements of condemnations will not relieve the nation of its duty," the House said in a statement issued hours after the end of a special session held to discuss what House Speaker Taher Al Masri called a serious event and a huge massacre.

"Statements of condemnations have become abundant and so have international decisions ... but the Zionist enemy continues to shed Palestinian blood," the statment said.

The House urged the Arab and Muslim nations "to confront the aggression, overcome their differences and unify their stands because (all Arab countries) are targetted."

In the statement, which was drafted by the House's permanent office, deputies urged Arab and Muslim countries to move on the international level and at the U.N. Security Council to have the international community stand up to the "aggression and demand that Israel withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and provide protection to the Palestinians until the pullout is completed."

The House called on Arab and international parliaments to condemn the continuous Israeli crimes against the Palestinians and guarantee their rights, mainly their right to self-determination.

While expressing appreciation of the immediate steps the government took in reaction to the massacre, the deputies urged the executive authority to increase its efforts to guarantee Arab, Muslim and international support for the Palestinians.

During the session, lawmakers said the massacre emphasises the necessity of concrete measures to protect Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories but differed on how it should affect the Arab-Israeli peace talks.

The 16-member Islamic Action Front (IAF) bloc said the House should demand that the government withdraw from the negotiations but failed to get a House vote on its bid after other deputies argued its constitutionality.

The House must call on the government "to abandon the bilateral and multilateral negotiations and move towards preparing the people to support our armed forces in the coming battle of honour," Deputy Hamzeh Mansour said in a speech on behalf of the IAF bloc.

"This criminal act has proven the correctness of the position of the IAF and other national, pan-Arab and Islamic forces ... that it is impossible to coexist with the Jewish enemy and that (the peace process) consolidates the occupation of our lands and holy places," the IAF said.

Mr. Masri argued against putting the IAF bid to vote on the grounds that such an important decision should not be taken after a "hasty and superficial discussion," pointing out that the session was specifically called to discuss the massacre and not the policies of the government.

But Mr. Masri, who said the massacre rings extra alarm because it happened "in a mosque, the most sacred of places," said the House could hold a special session to discuss Jordan's participation in the peace process if the deputies request it.

Deputy Abdul Karim Kabariti angered IAF deputies when he said it was unconstitutional to interfere in His

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Arabs and Muslims enraged, demand international action

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Tens of thousands of angry demonstrators poured into the streets of Arab and Islamic capitals on Saturday to denounce the massacre of Muslim worshippers in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Islamic states asked the U.N. Security Council for immediate action to ensure international protection for the Palestinians in occupied territories and to force Israel to disarm Jewish settlers.

The 51-member Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) said in a statement from its Jeddah headquarters that the Friday killing of dozens of Palestinians in Hebron's Ibrahimi Mosque was a blow to peace efforts.

It said OIC Secretary-General Hamid Al Gabid appealed to the Security Council "to act with resolute firmness to secure the necessary international protection for the Palestinian citizens."

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said on Saturday Israel rejects the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) call for an international force to protect Palestinians in the occupied territories following the massacre.

The OIC statement said Mr. Gabid urged the Security Council "to force Israel to ensure an adequate climate for the success of the ongoing negotiations, by adhering (to the PLO-Israel peace accord)... and by disarming the gangs of Zionist settlers."

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati called for an emergency meeting of OIC to consider coordinated Islamic action over the massacre, Tehran Radio said.

"The organisation is facing a serious test and its credibility is at stake," Mr. Velayati said in a letter to Mr. Gabid. "There is a need for an immediate and positive response to the wishes of Muslim people and militant groups."

He urged the OIC to review the latest developments in the occupied territories and take measures for "coordinated Islamic action in the face of Zionist plots and terror."

The Arab League will meet in Cairo on Sunday at the request of PLO leader Yasser Arafat to discuss what action to take following the massacre, the league's secretary-general, Esmat Abdul Meguid, said.

Earlier a senior PLO official, Samir Ghoshe, said the

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Amman protesters pledge retribution

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Gloom, shock and anger hung over Amman Saturday as flags flew at half mast, many schoolchildren staged sporadic protest marches and a two-hour closure to mourn the victims of Friday's Hebron massacre.

Jordanians of all backgrounds showed their outrage by taking to the streets in one of the most spontaneous public outbursts of anger since the Gulf war. In Irbid, Salt, Baqaa and all over Amman, men, women and children took to the streets waving black and green as well as Palestinian flags, shouting Islamic slogans and calling for an end to "negotiations with the enemy."

"No need to speak with those who murder us. Speak their language, the language of jihad," said a speaker at the Al Husseini Mosque during noon prayers Saturday.

Speaking to a crowd of some 2,500 people gathered in the downtown square in front of the mosque after marching from different districts of Amman, the speakers urged Muslims to "return to your faith and become defenders of the faith in Palestine as in Bosnia."

"The trio that betrayed you," (Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak) Rabin, (U.S. President Bill) Clinton and (Palestine leader Yasser) Arafat must not be allowed to pave the way of our future," said one speaker from inside the mosque whose address was broadcast through loudspeakers.

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'Israeli soldiers killed several in massacre'

HEBRON, occupied West Bank (Agencies) — Israel Television and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials said Saturday that not all of the mosque massacre victims were gunned down by a Jewish settler and that some had been killed by Israeli soldiers and others crushed to death in a stampede.

Israeli authorities have contended all victims slain in the mosque were killed by a lone gunman, a Jewish settler dressed in an army uniform who opened fire on the 800 worshippers as they knelt in prayer.

Lieutenant-General Ehud Barak, the armed forces chief of staff, said soldiers fired only warning shots outside the mosque and "not inside, not against the Arabs."

"Inside the mosque, nothing was shot. Here, at the entrance, they (soldiers) shot a few (bullets), but in the air," Gen. Barak told reporters outside the Ibrahim Mosque at the Tomb of the Patriarchs.

He said a full inquiry into the incident would be complete in one or two days.

Israel TV and radio said revised figures indicated 58 Palestinians were killed Friday, including 39 in the mosque and 19 by troops in subsequent rioting. Some 250 were wounded in the mosque and later protests, the reports said.

The state-owned television, citing initial findings emerging from an Israeli army investigation, said the gunman left his home in the nearby Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba at about 5:30 a.m. and arrived at the Ibrahim Mosque soon after.

The attacker, physician Baruch Goldstein, was dressed in an army uniform and was not checked for weapons when he entered the building. He rushed to the Muslim prayer room, hiding behind a pillar between the tombs of Sarah and Abraham so guards could not see him on closed-circuit television, the report said.

"Goldstein fired three magazines, about 100 bullets, and then one of the Islamic officials threw a fire extinguisher at him, and the worshippers beat him to death with iron bars," the TV reported.

"In the meantime, soldiers reached the hall and in the pandemonium, apparently some of them fired and killed additional worshippers. A few of the worshippers were also crushed to death in the subsequent stampede," the report said.

Palestinian leaders and several witnesses had charged earlier that soldiers were involved in the attack.

PLO negotiator Nabil Shaath said Saturday eight of Friday's victims at the mosque were shot to death by soldiers at the mosque's entrance, Egypt's Middle East News Agency reported.

"Palestinians pray daily in the mosque with the Israeli army guns pointed to their heads," Dr. Shaath was quoted as saying. "Where was the Israeli army at the time of the massacre."

"If no real protection is provided to the Palestinian people from the Israeli settlers, we will face new massacres every day."

Reporters saw settlers carrying Uzi submachine guns mingling with soldiers outside the mosque after Friday's massacre.

Israeli Police Minister Moshe Shaval, meanwhile, insisted the massacre was the work of a lone settler wielding his army issue automatic rifle.

He strongly denied claims from Palestinian witnesses that Israeli soldiers had opened fire in the confusion or that up to five settlers helped him and disappeared.

"There were absolutely no shots fired by Israeli soldiers," Mr. Shahal told Israeli radio.

He also dismissed claims of a "plot."

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Gulf Arabs blame Israeli government for massacre

DUBAI (Agencies) — Gulf Arab states held the Israeli government responsible for Friday's massacre by an Israeli settler of Palestinians at a mosque in the West Bank and boped the attack would not jeopardise Middle East peace efforts.

The governments of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates condemned in separate statements the killing of at least 60 Palestinian worshippers and tbe wounding of scores by one or more Israeli settlers in Hebron.

They urged the international community and the United Nations to take practical measures to protect Palestinians in the occupied territories.

The official Saudi Press Agency quoted an official source as saying in a statement that "the Israeli government was responsible for this massacre for ignoring the crimes that Israeli settlers commit against unarmed Palestinians."

"The source said this crime might have negative effects on the peace process in the Middle East," SPA said.

Saudi Arabia blamed Israel for failing to stop settler attacks on Palestinians.

The Saudi official said the killings were a sign of extremism, chauvinism and disregard for buman rights."

Urging the international community to protect the Palestinians, the official said "Israel is responsible for this massacre, for having ignored Israeli settlers' crimes against unarmed Palestinians.

The Emirates News Agency said an official source blamed in a statement the Israeli government "because it bas allowed the settlers to arm themselves and ignored their attacks and repeated crimes against unarmed Palestinians."

The UAE source urged the U.N. "to take practical steps to protect the civilian Palestinians and especially to disarm the settlers and remove their settlements from occupied territories."

Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassim Ben Jabr Al Thani hoped in a statement that the massacre would not affect the peace process, while a Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry spokesman told Kuwait's news agency KUNA that the Security Council sbould guarantee the rights and the safety of the Palestinians.

Lebanon called the massacre a reminder of the bolocaust and said it would cloud the atmosphere at the Middle East peace talks.

Foreign Minister Faris Bouez blamed the Israeli government, saying that while it held peace talks with the Arabs it also acted as a "partner" to Israeli radicals opposing peace.

"This massacre is a reminder of the holocaust," be told reporters. "This incident will disturb the atmosphere of the peace negotiations."

Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri said the massacre was the "natural result" of Israel's policy of putting settlers in the occupied territories and called for international action to end the occupation.

"We call the international community to ponder over this crime to find out its meaning whicb would lead to holding Israel fully responsible for sbedding the blood of innocent people," he added. "What is required also is collective action which puts an end to the continuation of tbe Israeli occupation and pusbes the peace process forward."

The pro-Iranian Hizbollah, which vebemently opposes peace talks with Israel, vowed to step up guerrilla attacks on Israeli forces occupying a buffer zone in South Lebanon.

Hizbollah (Party of God) said it would work with Palestinian groups to bring down "the (PLO-Israeli) Gaza-Jericho deal wbich encourages Jews to commit massacres."

Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah, spiritual leader of Lebanon's pro-Iranian Muslim fundamentalists, said the massacre showed there could be no coexistence between Arabs and Jews even if Arab states and Israel signed peace.

"The response (to the massacre) is that the Arab and Islamic world should spring forth to wipe out Israel from existence, even after 50 years," Sheikh Fadlallah told worshippers in Beirut. "Only the struggling method... stands up to this Jewish method."

Mr. Bouez accnsed tbe Israeli government of two-faced behaviour. He said it was simultanenusly holding peace talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon and collaborating with Israeli radicals opposed to the negotiations.

"This incident is a result of the continuous provocation by the (Israeli) government as a result of its supporting tbe rejection (of the peace process) which is part of this government's policy," Mr. Bouez said.

The Israeli government's attitude was one of "weakness at least towards those trying to work to sabotage the peace process," be added.

Libyan leader Colonel Moammar Qadhafi accused the Israeli government of masterminding the massacre .

In a statement distributed by the official JANA news agency, Colonel Qadhafi said that the massacre "is a horrible terroristic crime... officially planned by the Israeli government."

In a separate statement, JANA announced that Libya was in mourning. Islamic prayers for martyrs were recited in mosques across the country. The official radio and television cut away from normal programming and switched to mournful music and recitations from the Koran.

Col. Qadhafi accused the West of providing the Jewish state with arms and nuclear bombs to be used to quell "one of humanity's most sacred causes in the modern age."

"The West supports Israeli terrorism and treats the worriers of the Palestinian people like criminals," the statement monitored in Cairo said.

The statement added that "if there were a real Security Council and if there were a real United Nations other than the ones controlled by the Christians, we would see anyone supporting Israeli terrorism blacklisted, with a sea and air embargo imposed on them."

On Dec. 1, the U.N. Security Council stiffened air, arms and diplomatic sanctions imposed in April 1992. The new restrictions include a freeze on some Libyan financial assets and bans on supply of oil refinery equipment. Libya's main foreign currency earner is the oil industry.

In his statement, Col. Qadhafi compared Israeli leaders with Palestinian guerrilla bosses implicated in some of the bloodiest attacks.

"Abu Nidal, Ahmad Jibril and others of the Palestinian people's fighters are angels compared to the Israeli monsters," be said.

Abu Nidal, whose real name is Sabri Al Banna, and Mr. Jibril lead factions that long ago broke with the Palestine Liberation Organisation's mainstream Fateb movement.

In Cairo, the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood party urged the international community to send troops to protect Palestinian civilians and save holy Islamic and Christian sites.

"This terrible crime only reflects the Zionists' offensive nature," the Brotherhood said in a dispatch faxed to the Associated Press. They "took the country and made its owners into refugees or living under occupation and coercion."

The Muslim Brotherhood is tolerated by the Egyptian government but banned by law.

A Palestinian woman who has many relatives in Hebron in the occupied West Bank cries at her Baghdad residence Saturday following Friday's massacre of more than 60 Muslim worshippers at a mosque in Hebron (AFP photo)

Israeli soldiers keep watch over the Shawfat refugee camp in Jerusalem during heavy clashes following Friday's massacre of more than 60 Palestinians by a Jewish settler in a mosque in the town of Hebron (AFP photo)

Hebron massacre unlikely to derail peace negotiations

By Alan Elsner
Reuter

WASHINGTON — The United States, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) responded to the Hebron massacre of dozens of Palestinians by an Israeli settler Friday with a bold diplomatic attempt to turn tragedy into peace.

Reacting quickly to the massacre, President Bill Clinton invited the Israelis und Palestinians to Washington to tie up the remaining loose ends of their historic interim peace agreement within a relatively short time.

Anxious to contain the violent fallout from the shooting and prevent extremists on either side from capturing the initiative, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO leader Yasser Arafat agreed.

"Extremists on both sides are determined to drag Arabs and Israelis back into the darkness of unending conflict," Mr. Clinton said in condemning the massacre of at least 48 Palestinian worshippers in a West Bank mosque.

"The answer now is to redouble our efforts to conclude the talks between the Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation and begin implementation of the agreement they have made as rapidly as possible," Mr. Clinton said.

Analysts said the massacre seemed unlikely to destroy peace efforts.

"No, it doesn't derail the peace process," said Richard Haass, a Middle East adviser to former President George Bush.

"Something of this sort was inevitable. Whenever moderates get busy making peace, radicals get busier trying to destroy it," said Dr. Haass, who is now with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

"But once the emotions clear, the same realities remain for both sides."

Analyst Judith Kipper of the Brookings Institution agreed. "It will not stop the peace process. Nothing is going to stop the peace process. This is obviously a huge event. But if the parties handle it right, they can get over it," she said.

Analysts said both Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat had to try to ensure that the massacre remained an isolated event and not the beginning of a new spiral of violence.

In the initial spillover, at least 12 more Palestinians were shot dead in clashes with Israelis that erupted throughout the occupied territories after the shooting. Police also fired teargas to disperse 120,000 Arab who massed in Jerusalem, but there were no reports of casualties there and the protest fizzled out.

Mr. Arafat may have the tougher task restoring order to his shocked ranks. Operating from his far-off base in Tunis, he was already under pressure from hardliners who reject his peace deal with Israel, and he faced internal challenges from those who dislike his leadership style.

Mr. Arafat said the whole Middle East peace process could backfire. He called PLO leaders to a crisis meeting in Tunis.

"What has happened today in the mosque is a real tragedy and will make a very negative backfire on the whole peace process," he told CNN television in an interview.

A close aide to Mr. Arafat said the shooting spelled doom for the PLO-Israel peace deal, negotiated in secret in Norway and signed to fanfare in Washington last September.

"What happened at Hebron is the last nail in the coffin for the Oslo accord," Jibril Rajub, Mr. Arafat's adviser for occupied territories affairs, told Reuters in Tunis.

But the PLO leader may have little choice in the long run but to pursue peace with Israel. He has nailed his colours to the interim peace agreement and was seen around the world shaking hands with Mr. Rabin.

The agreement, which envisages an Israeli military withdrawal from the occupied Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho, has been hard to complete. But the parties were getting close in intensive talks over recent weeks.

Paradoxically, Mr. Rabin may be strengthened by the massacre, which could weaken and isolate the militant settler movement in Israeli society.

Mr. Rabin was bound to come into confrontation at some point with die-hard settlers who believe they are commanded by God to preserve Israeli control over the West Bank.

Now the 120,000 settlers will find themselves reviled by large sections of Israeli society. This could increase Mr. Rabin's motivation to accelerate the showdown by trying to strike a final deal with the PLO.

USIA adds: A senior administration official said the more intense round of Washington talks may begin as early as next week and will involve the same Israeli and Palestinian bargainers who have made what he called "encouraging progress" in a series of sessions in Taba and Cairo. The remaining issues, he suggested, involve security matters in Gaza and Jericho, including the role of Palestinian police; the nature of economic relations between Israel and the Palestinians; and the transfer of authority from Israelis to Palestinians at as many as 45 or 46 locations.

He said the U.S. purpose is "to accelerate the negotiations ... and to try to bring them to a successful conclusion in the shortest possible time." The "essence" of the American role, he added, "is supportive," but he acknowledged that administration officials would be "active" facilitators. U.S. diplomats, he explained, will be talking to each side, exploring the needs of each, and assessing how each side interprets the positions of the other. "We can help identify what the differences are," he said, "and sometimes we can be helpful by clarifying each side's understanding of the other's stance."

The official said Mr. Clinton issued the invitation to Washington because the mosque massacre "had the potential to unravel the progress that had been made. We wanted to make sure the process was not derailed and to be certain we did everything we could to make sure that is not the case."

U.S. troops leaving Somalia with successes, failures

By Reid G. Miller
The Associated Press

MOGADISHU — Sword Base, Hunter Base, Victory Base.

They were incongruous, bellicose-sounding names for American military bases in Somalia, hard-edged names as inconsistent with a humanitarian mission as was the policy that guided it.

The desert-tan camouflage fatigues of the Americans are gone now from these heavily fortified positions in southern Mogadishu, replaced by the darker green uniforms of other nations.

As U.S. soldiers withdraw from Somalia, they leave behind a mixed record of success and failure in trying to rescue the nation from famine and anarchy and put it on a path towards democracy.

Their major success came early.

When U.S. Marines arrived on Dec. 9, 1992, the United Nations estimated that two million Somalis might die in a devastating famine.

More than 350,000 already were dead of starvation, disease and warfare among clan militias.

Within a month, more than 25,000 U.S. servicemen and women and 13,000 soldiers from 20 other nations had opened blocked sea and air ports in Mogadishu and in the southern city of Kismayu. Food convoys were rolling into the interior along roads once controlled by bandits and warlords — "Indian country," the Americans called it.

The famine, already waning, was halted.

That triumph was soon obscured, however, as the humanitarian mission passed into the hands of the United Nations. It became a small-scale war that, ultimately, the American public could not stomach.

Only slightly over 2,000 American soldiers remain in Somalia, all but a handful assembled at the Mogadishu airport awaiting transport home. They abandoned the streets months ago to young Somali toughs brandishing once-forbidden weapons.

As the withdrawal nears an end, U.S. commanders blame the failures on policymakers — in Washington and at U.N. headquarters in New York — who they feel set goals the United Nations had neither the expertise, resources nor manpower to achieve. Today, some of those goals have been abandoned.

Consider:

— The United States, and then the United Nations, tried to diminish the political influence of General Mohammad Farah Aideed, a warlord who controlled the southern half of Mogadishu.

Later, the United Nations accused him of masterminding attacks June 5 that killed 24 Pakistani peacekeepers. It put a $25,000 price on his head and tried to arrest him. That effort ended when 18 Americans were killed in a battle with Gen. Aideed's militia Oct. 3-4 in a bungled attempt to arrest some of his lieutenants. The United Nations now treats Aideed as a political leader.

— Somalia is arguably no closer to democracy than when the Americans arrived. The United Nations is trying to build a government from the grass roots. Gen. Aideed rejects the U.N. effort and says he is close to forming his own transitional government in partnership with other faction leaders.

— Banditry, attacks on private aid agencies and armed skirmishes between clans have been on the rise throughout southern Somalia since the U.S. decision to withdraw was announced in October — a decision followed by Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Norway, Tunisia and Turkey. Security in some areas is as bad as it ever was.

— The United Nations pins its hopes of controlling the violence on recruiting and training an independent 10,000-member national police force. The United States has contributed $25 million in weapons, ammunition, vehicles and other equipment. U.N. officials say the force's success will depend on its acceptance by Somalis. Gen. Aideed says he plans to form his own police force.

— The Americans arrived with no thought of disarming Somalia or trying to build democratic institutions, goals they deemed either impossible or impracticable. But the United States lent its vote to a Security Council resolution giving those tasks to the U.N. force that took over from the U.S.-led military coalition in May. Earlier this month, the United Nations abandoned any idea of forcible disarmament.

— Since the U.N. takeover 10 months ago, 25 Americans soldiers have been killed and 128 wounded in combat with militia forces. In all, the United Nations has lost 81 peacekeepers and had 329 wounded. No accurate count has been made of Somali casualties, but they are estimated in the hundreds. So many casualties would have been inconceivable a year ago.

"The breakdown came in defining the follow-on role" of the U.N. force, said Raoul Archambault of the U.S. Arm's 10th mountain Division. Its men and women were among more than 8,000 Americans who made up the largest single contingent in a 34,000-member U.N. force from 30 nations.

Other U.S. military officers said disarmament never was feasible in a country that both sides in the cold war had used as a dumping ground for hundreds of thousands of weapons of every description. Nor did they ever relish the task of trying to capture Gen. Aideed, a job that fell largely to the Americans and one they said was more suited to policemen than to soldiers.

"As the U.S. role comes to a close, the very same players are on the stage," Colonel Archambault said in an interview, referring to Gen. Aideed and his fellow warlords.

"We've always been dealing with a group of thugs. The intelligensia and the middle class left a long time ago. Any attempt to get a civil government short of dictatorship will have to lure the middle class and the refugees back into the country.

"I think you are going to see anarchy in this country, probably by the end of the year. The emergency will start again."

American withdrawal began in January and will end next month in much the same way the initial intervention was launched more than a year ago, with the landing of U.S. Marines in Mogadishu.

This time, the Marines will form a rear guard protecting the withdrawal of the last American soldiers, a force so weakened by reduction in size and removal of its heavy weapons that it will be no longer be capable of defending itself.

The Marine expeditionary unit, about 2,200 men based on four navy ships off Mogadishu, will itself be protected by another seaborne marine unit and a navy carrier group that sits farther offshore with enough air power to level what remains of Mogadishu after three years of off-and-on warfare.

U.S. soldiers came to Somalia by air, but most are leaving by sea for Mombasa, Kenya, where they board transport planes for home.

Their commanders did not want to risk having a planeload of Americans shot out of the sky as it took off from Mogadishu.

That would have been the final failure.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
17:30
Feature film: "La Guerre Des Privcs"
19:00 ..... News in French
19:15 ..... Fenire Sur
19:30 ..... News in Hebrew
20:00 ..... News in Arabic
21:30 ..... You Bet Your Life
22:00 ..... News in English
22:20
Documentary: "Out Of The Past"
23:10 ..... Island Son

PRAYER TIMES

04:45 ..... Fajr
06:02 ..... *(Sunrise) Duha*
11:49 ..... Dhuhr
15:02 ..... 'Asr
17:34 ..... Mughreb
18:51 ..... 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swelfieh. Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasanta Church Tel: 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 630851. Tel. 628543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 652526.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel: 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazarene Tel.675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman
Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

A cold air front will affect the Kingdom, thus clouds will build up, rain will fall in the northern and central parts of Jordan with temperature dropping and winds becoming westerly moderate to active. In Aqaba, partly cloudy weather conditions will prevail, with winds becoming southerly moderate and seas rough.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman ..... 5 / 13
Aqaba ..... 11 / 22
Deserts ..... 4 /16
Jordan Valley ..... 9 / 20

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 18, Aqaba 26 Humidity readings: Amman 20 per cent, Aqaba 13 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Mukhles Halasa 819220
Dr. Youscf Sammour 615648
Dr. Isam Al Asmar 890504
Dr. Jamil Maraqa 776149
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows phurmacy 778336
Al Ascma pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani phatmacy 637660
Nairouih pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ali Al Omari 272032
Alquds pharmacy ..... (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Youscf Harzallah 988075
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaintu 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 664171/4
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Mussher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marka 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital ..... (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital ..... (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital ..... (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital ..... (09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital ..... (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital ..... (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital ..... (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital ..... (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:15 ..... Bangkok (RJ)
08:00 ..... Aqaba (RJ)
08:35 ..... Damascuss (RJ)
09:00 ..... Jeddah (RJ)
09:15 ..... Larnaca (RJ)
09:15 ..... Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:00 ..... Beirut (RJ)
10:00 ..... Larnaca, Damascus (RJ)
10:20 ..... Doha (RJ)
16:45 ..... New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:55 ..... Cairo (RJ)
17:25 ..... Paris, Brussels (RJ)
17:55 ..... London (RJ)
18:00 ..... Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
18:35 ..... Athens (RJ)
20:45 ..... Frankfurt (RJ)
21:10 ..... Vienna (RJ)
21:20 ..... Rome (RJ)
21:25 ..... Aqaba (add) (RJ)
00:45 ..... Aquba (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

11:00 ..... Damascus (AZ)
12:25 ..... Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
14:25 ..... Moscow (SU)
19:40 ..... Larnaca (CY)
19:45 ..... Beirut (ME)
21:50 ..... Cairo (MS)
22:20 ..... Istanbul (TA)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:30 ..... Aqaba (RJ)
06:00 ..... Beirut (RJ)
09:10 ..... Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
10:30 ..... Rome (RJ)
10:45 ..... Aqaba (add) (RJ)
10:50 ..... Aqaba, Vienna (RJ)
11:15 ..... Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
11:30 ..... Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00 ..... Athens (RJ)
12:45 ..... Cairo (RJ)
20:45 ..... Damascus (RJ)
21:30 ..... Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
21:45 ..... New Delhi (RJ)
22:00 ..... Jeddah (RJ)
22:05 Singapour, Kuala Lumper (RJ)
22:30 ..... Aqaba (RJ)
22:30 ..... Bangkok (RJ)
22:45 ..... Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

12:10 ..... Rome (AZ)
13:30 ..... Doha, Bahrain (GF)
16:05 ..... Moscow (SU)
20:25 ..... Larnaca (CY)
22:50 ..... Cairo (MS)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple	550/ 650
Banana	680
Banana (Mukammar)	620
Cabbage	70 / 40
Carrot	200/120
Cauliflower	160/ 100
Clementine	260 / 200
Cucumbers (large)	140 / 80
Cucumbers (small)	250 / 200
Eggplant	2500 / 80
Garlic	900/800
Grape Fruit	220/120
Green beans	1000/ 600
Lemon	180 / 100
Marrow (large)	140 / 80
Marrow (small)	300 / 200
Olives (green)	700/500
Orange	470/ 120
Onion (dry)	350 / 300
Onion (green)	240 / 180
Pepper (hot)	400 / 240
Pepper (sweet)	400 / 240
Potato	240/ 170
Radish	150/ 100
Tomato	210/ 130
Spinach	140 / 80
String beans	1100/ 700

His Majesty King Hussein Saturday performs the Maghreb prayers with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, Lower House of Parliament Speaker Taher Masri and other religious officials and legislators. King Hussein later hosted an iftar for the Lower House deputies (Petra photo)

Government supports Senate's call for Arab summit conference — Majali

Senators condemn Hebron massacre in special session

AMMAN (Petra) — The government Saturday said it supported a call by the Upper House of Parliament (Senate) to convene an Arab summit conference to discuss the Middle East situation in light of Friday's massacre of more than 60 Palestinians in Hebron. Addressing a special session of the Senate, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali reiterated the government's demand that the Israeli settlements in the occupied Arab lands be dismantled.

The government also supports calls for convening a meeting of the Arab parliaments to adopt a pan-Arab stand on Israel's practices and its occupation of Arab lands, said the premier.

Dr. Majali said that the killing of the worshippers was a classical example of cold-blooded murder because there was no resistance, protest or attack on the part of the Arabs to provoke the Israeli assailants.

In all negotiations with Israel Jordan has stressed that terrorism stemmed from the presence of the Israeli settlements said Dr. Majali, adding that the Western nations realised the inherent danger of the settlements only after Friday's massacre.

He told the Senate that the United States, which has strongly condemned the Hebron massacre, has approved Jordan's request for holding continuous negotiations until a final result has materialised and subsequently the U.S. administration has called the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel to resume their negotiations immediately in Washington.

The prime minister said the Kingdom will continue to support its Palestinian brothers and coordinate its stand with the Syrians and the Lebanese in the peace negotiations.

He said that the government has allocated JD 100,000 to the families of the victims of Friday's terrorist attack.

His Majesty King Hussein Friday donated JD 100,000 to the families.

Dr. Majali added that the government has set up a special fund to raise donations for the Palestinian people to help them withstand the consequences of the occupation.

The prime minister said that Saturday 5,000 persons marched in a demonstration in downtown Amman, another 5,000 people marched from Baqaa refugee camp to Sweileh, 400 walked in Zarqa and unspecified numbers marched in the refugee camps.

"Although we approve of public means of expression, we remain apprehensive that certain elements could infiltrate the marches and exploit them to conduct acts of violence," Dr. Majali said.

The prime minister's address followed several statements by senators who condemned the terrorist attack against the worshippers and demanded that the Arabs unify their ranks in the face of the Israeli occupation of Arab lands and holy shrines.

Senate Speaker Ahmad Lawzi said that the massacre ought to be a lesson to Arabs and Muslims and prompt them to be ready to face dangers and challenges.

Senator Thouqan Hindawi said that the Senate should call for a revision of the Oslo and Cairo agreements between Israel and the PLO with a view to introducing an amendment calling for the termination of Jewish settlements in Arab lands.

Senator Nathir Rasbid demanded that Jordan ask the United Nations to provide protection to the civilian population in the Arab lands.

According to Senator Naela Rashdan, the Arabs, through their continued divisions, are partly to blame for the plight of the Palestinian people.

Senator Ahmad Obeidat said the massacre represented an open message to the world that Israel gives no regard to international charters or laws and that its calls for peace with the Arabs are nothing but a form of deception to mislead world public opinion.

According to Senator Kamel Sharif, the massacre clearly showed that there can be no co-existence between the Arabs and the Israelis, adding that the Zionism ideology clearly rejects any form of co-existence with the Arabs.

Later in a statement, the Senate condemned the massacre and called on the United Nations and the international community to take deterrent measures to guarantee protection for Palestinians living under Israeli occupation to prevent the repetition of such incidents.

The Senate stressed that the massacre was not an isolated individual measure as the Israeli authorities have been trying to describe it, but it was an inevitable outcome of Zionist dogma which is originally based on deepening the feelings of malice and hatred against the Palestinian people.

"These malicious feelings were used to serve Israel's expansionist policies and to justify the occupation of Arab Palestine and the eviction of the majority of its legitimate people," said the statement.

The Senators also decided to donate their salaries for a month to the victims of the massacre and their families.

1-day public safety conference to improve present measures

By Rana Husseini
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A public safety conference will be held today (Sunday) under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan to review present safety procedures at institutes around the Kingdom and make recommendations and suggestions to improve these measures.

The one-day conference will discuss ways to ensure that public and private institutes and factories meet safety regulations, according to Captain Raouf Ma'aytah, director of public relations at the Civil Defence Department (CDD).

Capt. Ma'aytah told the Jordan Times that all concerned authorities will submit working papers, and recommendations and propose new legislation to ensure safety measures at all institutes.

He said participants will be divided into committees, and each committee will study the proposals then submit recommendations for approval.

Capt. Ma'aytah said there were continuous efforts by the authorities to conduct a conference on safety, but what spurred them to schedule Sunday's conference was the Safeway fire that occurred on Dec. 11, 1993. More than 300 people were injured in the incident, which was said to be caused by an electrical short circuit.

"The Safeway blaze was like an alarm to us, and it was one of the important reasons for convening the conference," Capt. Ma'aytah told the Jordan Times.

He said, for example, when the new rules and regulations will be applied, all factories and corporations will be required to have first aid boxes.

In addition, he said, some newly-built factories do not meet safety specifications.

"But now, before obtaining a licence to build, they will be required to check with the CDD to make sure that they meet all safety regulations," Capt. Ma'aytah said.

Other participants to the conference included representatives of the ministries of Interior, Health and Labour.

Hebron attack cuts into support for Mideast peace

By Jamal Halaby
Associated Press

BAQAA CAMP, — The massacre of more than 60 worshippers at a West Bank mosque has sapped the already wanning support for the Middle East peace process among Palestinian refugees in Jordan.

Coupled with what they see as Israeli procrastination in the peace talks, Friday's slaughter by a Jewish settler at a mosque in Hebron appeared to have convinced many that there cannot be a fair peace in the Middle East.

A sense of gloom hung over this camp of 100,000 Palestinian refugees from the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli wars.

A majority of them earlier had rallied behind the Sept. 13 peace accord signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

"I no longer trust Israeli intentions," said Rabah Abu Halimeh, a Baqaa shopkeeper who fled Nablus in the West Bank in 1967. "The Israelis are liars and only want to kill us."

Speaking at the doorway of his shop, Mr. Abu Halimeh and his friends said armed struggle against Israel was the only way to regain Palestinian rights.

As they spoke, more than 2,500 Palestinian youths marched through the narrow streets of this camp, 27 kilometres north of Amman, chanting slogans against PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and the peace process.

The demonstrators, led by masked, knife-wielding activists of the Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas, shouted "Allahu Akbar," and vowed to avenge the mosque attack.

A Hamas spokesman said the group would target Israeli settlers.

No violence was reported from more than a dozen noisy but peaceful demonstrations elsewhere.

"No to peace, yes to the gun," chanted more than 1,000 protesters who wound through downtown Amman, where most shops in the bustling souk hung black flags signaling mourning.

More than 300 Islamist students attempted to reach the U.S. embassy in Amman to register their protest at the Hebron killings, but were turned away by riot police.

Islamist resistance movement (Hamas) follower Saturday brandishes a knife during a demonstration in Baqaa refugee camp (Photo by Yousef Al-Allan)

Televideo link-up to provide access to Mayo Clinic experts

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Patients in Jordan will soon have access to the expertise of the Mayo Clinic of the U.S. in diagnosis and treatment without having to travel to the reputed medical facility in Rochester, Minnesota, under an agreement signed this month.

Jihad Barghouti, chairman of the Amman Diagnostic Centre, a private sector venture, said a direct satellite link with televideo facilities would be established with the Mayo Clinic to facilitate on-the-spot diagnosis of patients at the Amman centre.

In essence, the arrangement would mean that a patient could walk into the Amman Diagnostic Centre and be examined by the centre's doctors as well as Mayo Clinic experts who would have direct access to the patient through the video link-up.

The main link-up will be with the clinic in Rochester, but the overall network will include the clinic's centres in other parts of the United States, Dr. Barghouti told the Jordan Times.

Dr. Barghouti, an ear, nose and throat specialist, said the arrangement would initially involve the Amman Surgical Hospital from September before the Amman Diagnostic Centre is complete and ready to offer its services in 18 months.

The Amman Surgical Hospital, which was set up in 1992, already has an arrangement under which its doctors consult with Mayo Clinic experts over the phone and fax.

The Amman Diagnostic Centre, which Dr. Barghouti chairs, has a capital of JD 12 million raised by 32 investors.

Dr. Barghouti is also deputy chairman of the board of directors of the Amman Surgical Hospital and a part-time practitioner there.

The agreement between the centre and the Mayo Clinic provides for an annual fee to be paid to the U.S. facility for the services in addition to other charges on a case-by-case basis, including regular visits by its experts to Amman.

Under the programme, Mayo Clinic experts will also offer training to doctors assigned by the Amman centre and deliver regular lectures on developments and advances in medicine over the satellite to audiences in Amman.

Dr. Barghouti said the Amman centre would not limit itself to any specialisation. "Our services will cover all areas of medicine," he told the Jordan Times.

The Mayo Clinic is one of the best medical facilities with a high international reputation. Many heads of state and statesmen have had treatment there.

His Majesty King Hussein underwent successful cancer surgery in the Rochester clinic in August 1992. He visited the facility twice since then for periodic check-ups. A third visit is scheduled for mid-1994.

Dr. Barghouti said King Hussein "gave his blessings and encouraged" the venture between the Amman Diagnostic Centre and the Mayo Clinic.

The new agreement was signed on Feb. 18 by Dr. Barghouti and Mayo Clinic Director Rick Colwin.

U.S. sources said the Mayo Clinic signed the agreement after it was satisfied with the "high level of medical expertise" available in Jordan.

Jordan boasts of housing some of the best medical facilities in the Middle East and has also notched its mark as being the first country in the region to have successfully conducted several breakthrough operations, including the first test-tube baby in the Arab World.

The first heart transplant in the region was carried out at the King Hussein Medical Centre in 1985.

Dr. Barghouti himself is known for having conducted the first "cochlear implant" in the Middle East in 1986, making Jordan the 13th country in the world at that time to have successfully conducted such an operation.

The process involves implanting a "very sophisticated device in the human ear" to help address deafness, said Dr. Barghouti, who successfully conducted nearly 20 such operations since 1986.

Ministry to investigate public company failures

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Ministry of Trade and Industry has set up a special committee to investigate the reasons behind the unsatisfactory performance of a number of public companies, according to minister Rima Khalaf.

The committee, which has already started studying the performance of Ma'an's glass factory, will perform similar studies on other companies like Sawt-Al-Sha'b Publishing Company, to try and find solutions to their financial and economic problems, Dr. Khalaf told the Jordan Times.

Dr. Khalaf said the study on the glass factory, which is being performed with the help of a foreign expert, aims at forecasting local demands for glass and its specifications, exploring possibilities for export and determining plans for putting the factory on a successful track.

The Ma'an Glass Factory was established in 1974 with a starting capital of JD 1 million, which shot up to JD 9 million by 1987. The factory employs 300 Jordanian workers and is the only industrial project in Ma'an.

But the factory has incurred tremendous losses as unit production costs are five times greater than its selling price, company sources said.

The sources described the factory's situation as "tragic," claiming the "previous dishonest management" was responsible for the factory's state.

The sources claimed that the government did not detect the "defects of previous managements which led to the loss of approximately JD 16 million by the company."

Asked not to be named, the sources emphasised the need to study the reasons behind the factory's economic failure, saying it is "a national and human responsibility to make an effort to reform the company's situation."

Deputy Theeb Abdullah pointed to many irregularities at the factory, claiming the company was importing raw glass at prices far more expensive than the market price for the finished product.

Mr. Abdullah had raised the issue of the Ma'an Glass Factory during the Lower House of Parliament debate on the budget last December, urging the government to "prosecute those responsible for the factory's fall."

He charged that 14 tonnes of glass were missing from the factory, which he said did not start production until 1984.

"I hope officials would review glass contracts and deals with other countries to determine their accuracy," said Mr. Abdullah.

Dr. Khalaf said that the study also focuses on technical aspects of the glass industry that would throw light on enhancing production facilities and practices for the plant.

She said the committee involved in this wide-range study is making financial estimates for investment outlets and analysing prices to make possible the reduction of cost of glass-cutting and handling.

According to Dr. Khalaf, "the 12-week study is expected to end in late February," and based on the results, technical and financial measures will be taken to improve the plant's situation.

Meanwhile, the minister said that a preliminary investigation is being done to assess Dar Al Sha'b publishing company's past performance and determine areas of additional study after identifying problems in light of which the ministry can take reform measures.

Dar Al-Sha'b was established in 1975 with a starting capital of JD 200,000 that went up to JD 1 million, the government being the largest contributor with 67 per cent of the company's capital.

The company, which was closed for a year in the early 80's, has been suffering from financial difficulties since and is indebted to the Treasury by JD 1,145,000.

Dr. Khalaf said the committee plans to carry out several similar studies.

Intifada supporters donate JD 150,000 to victims of Friday massacre in Hebron

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian Popular Committee for Supporting the Palestinian Intifada in the occupied Arab lands Saturday announced the donation of JD 150,000 to the wounded and the families of those killed in Friday's massacre at Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron.

Committee Chairman Mamdouh Al Abbad said the donation reflects the committee's determination to pursue its efforts to come to the aid of brothers in the Israeli-held Arab lands and to support their steadfastness in the face of repression.

It is also a gesture to reaffirm the unity of blood and the common destiny of the Jordanian and the Palestinian people, added Dr. Abbadi.

The committee has never stopped its support and help to the intifada and has been allocating JD1,000 to the families of martyrs and JD300 to every wounded Palestinian in the course of resisting Israeli occupation, he said. The panel also provides medical treatment to many wounded persons in Jordanian hospitals and supports the work of charity organisations of the Palestinian lands, said Dr. Abbadi.

Referring to the Israeli-terrorist attack that killed more than 60 Palestinians Friday Dr. Abbadi said that it was a clear link in a long chain of Zionist terrorism against the Arab and Muslim people and a flagrant violation of the sanctity of the holy places.

While condemning the massacre as a heinous crime perpetrated and executed in cold blood, the committee calls on all the Palestinian faction to end their differences, unite and step up their acts of resistance against the occupation, said Dr. Abbadi.

The committee, he added, calls on the Jordanian people to contribute generously towards supporting the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people.

Statements condemning the massacres were issued Saturday by the Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS), the Arab Writers Association, the Jordanian Businessmen's Association, Jordanian political parties, the Jordanian Artists Association, the Higher Arab Committee for Palestine, the Middle East Council of Churches and the International Commission of Jurists in Geneva.

They demanded protection for the Palestinian under occupation and safeguards of the Arab institutions and holy places.

First women's products fair displays goods from 22 firms

By Rana Husseini
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Women's World Fair 1994 Sunday opened at the Jordan Inter-Continental Hotel with an exhibition of products from 22 local commercial enterprises.

President of the General Union of Women in Jordan Nujoud Fawzi opened the fair saying that this exhibition was an excellent opportunity for all women in the Kingdom to get exposed to new products.

"This exhibition is very useful for women because it offers a wide and comprehensive variety of goods that all women might need in their daily lives," Mrs. Fawzi said.

She said that people are beginning to attend more product exhibitions because they carry all necessities in one place, thus making it easier for people to shop and find what they need.

According to Akram Abu Ahah, general manager of Aseel, the exhibition's organisers, each participating store is displaying hand-made goods and international products.

The exhibition is considered the first in Jordan to specialise in women's products including perfumes, cosmetics, skin care products, make-up, hair products, underwear bags, pyjamas, home appliances, and clothing.

"We are hoping that this exhibition will become an annual event, because we are also planning to organise a women's and men's fair real soon," Mr. Abu Ahah said.

Suhair Saleem, director of public relations at Aseel, said the first day of the exhibition was very successful, but it lacked only the presence of Jordanian products.

"People need to be exposed to our national products and support them, and the best way to do this is through exhibitions," Ms. Saleem said.

"Most Jordanian manufacturers do not want to publicise their products, and they just want to make a profit without advertising," she added. Although the Jordanian products were missing in this exhibition, Ms. Saleem said, individual Jordanian craftspeople, artists and designers contributed their artistic work to the fair.

The Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF) is displaying rugs that were hand-made by Jordanian women, according to Maha Saqa, QAF marketing director.

"We have trained women, young and old on developing their skills in producing nice rugs, thus helping them learn new professions and helping them to establish themselves properly," Ms. Saqa said.

Sabah Hadidi said that the display of his pottery at the fair reflects the Jordanian identities and culture.

"The pottery reflects our beliefs and culture and is a chance for people in other countries to be exposed to our capabilities and perspectives," Mr. Hadidi said.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- Exhibition of paintings by Riham Ghassib at The Gallery Inter.Continental Hotel.
- Art exhibition by artist Jalal Ariqat at Ah'ad Art Gallery (10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. except Fridays).
- Art exhibition by several artists at the Alia Art Gallery (8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.).
- Art exhibition by Iraqi artists at the Royal Cultural Centre (8:30 p.m.-midnight).
- Photo exhibition by artist Latifa Yousef at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- Exhibition of medical herbs at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre (7:00 p.m.-midnight).
- Art exhibition by Jordanian artists at the Royal Cultural Centre (7:00 p.m.-midnight).
- Wood carving exhibition by artist Samer Ousama at the French Cultural Centre.
- Art and photo exhibition by several Arab artists at the Balqa Art Gallery in Fuheis (Tel. 720902).
- "Permanent" exhibition of 54 Arab contemporary artists at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Amman (Tel. 643251/2).
- Art exhibition by several Iraqi and Jordanian artists at Orfali Art Gallery (Tel. 826932).

FILM

- Film entitled "A Civil War Story" at the American Center at 2:30 p.m. (122 minutes).

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

- Musical performance by Al Hannounah band at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:30 p.m.

DRAMA

- Drama entitled "The Question" at the Royal Cultural Centre (11:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.).

SEMINAR

- Seminar entitled "Dialogue Among Religions" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:30 p.m.

هكذا من الأصل

Jordan Times

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Established 1975

جوردن تايمز يومية عربية سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية

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Injustice not without price

IN THE wake of the universal condemnation of Friday's massacre of over 60 Palestinian worshippers and injuring of hundreds of others, it is high time to address the core problem that gave rise to that barbaric act in the first place. There is no doubt that Israel's settlement programme that planted thousands of Jewish zealots in the middle of Palestinian communities is the root cause of the ugly scene that the world saw with horror and indignation over the past two days.

That present and previous Israeli governments have aided and abetted the illegal Israeli colonisation of the occupied Arab territories is a foregone conclusion. It is also a fact that Washington and its allies which have rhetorically deplored this Israeli threat to peace have paid only lip service so far to addressing the problem at its roots.

The U.S. reacted only timidly in recent weeks to the news that the Israeli government was effectively continuing in the footsteps of the Likud in its settlement programme. Instead of cutting deeply into its over $3 billion aid package to Israel, the Clinton administration was content with reducing the amount of loan guarantees that President Bush gave to the Israelis to absorb new Jewish immigrants. Meanwhile, Israeli settlers, whose fanaticism and arrogance were going to display themselves in violent acts against the Palestinians at any time now, were allowed a free hand to do what they will, even to sabotage the peace process itself. A tragedy was bound to follow. It was the Hebron massacre, no less.

In legal terms, the Israeli government is an accomplice in that massacre, even though the person or persons who pulled the trigger are deranged, insane, or otherwise. When a party arms fanatics and extremists and lets them loose, it must bear full responsibility for their acts and crimes.

This leads us to the only conclusion possible in this regard: the settlements must be evacuated and settlers repatriated to wherever they came from. Unfortunately, Yitzhak Rabin is hindering even those who wish voluntarily to return to Israel. Only last week he admitted before the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee that hundreds of settlers were seeking compensation in order to leave, but that his decision was to refuse such a request. It appears that his government seeks to use the continued presence of settlers on Palestinian lands as a trump card in the peace talks with the Arab side. Even if this stance is a good negotiating tactic from Israel's point of view, the end result is calamitous for both Arabs and Israelis. All parties agree that the cycle of violence between Palestinians and Israelis has deep roots in the settlement policy of Zionist Israel.

If, on the other hand, the supposedly pro-peace government in Israel wants to capitalise financially on the settlement issue, the international community has to find a way to deal with Israel on this score. After all, Israel and the world owe the Palestinians much more than the cost of the settlements that were built and maintained illegally on their land. The least Jews and gentiles can do is to hand over those settlements to the Palestinians as part of an historic compensation for the grave injustices they have suffered over the years.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

COMMENTING ON the massacre at the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily said that the genocide reminds the Arabs of the Deir Yassin massacre that took place in 1948. Tareq Masarweh said that both massacres occurred as the world community watched doing nothing to end the repression, the occupation and the atrocities. These massacres said Masarweh, are designed to spread fear in the hearts of the Arab population and force them to evict their homeland for the settlers to colonise it. Now that the settlers are living inside Hebron and around it, there is nothing that can stop further acts of terrorism and genocides and there is nothing that can help protect the defenceless Palestinians in their desperate struggle for freedom, he said. The world community at large and those who claim they are working for peace in particular are to blame for the lack of peace in our land and for the continuation of occupation, repression and murder, he said. The world community seems to be asking the Palestinians to welcome the occupation and its atrocities while it continues to provide the criminals with all kinds of weapons to carry out further criminal acts against the Palestinians and their holy places, he said. This is the kind of peace which Israel wants to impose on the Arabs.

ALL THE statements issued and that continue to come out in condemnation of the Hebron massacre can not help the dead and wounded nor can they end the presence of the settlements in the occupied Arab land, said a columnist in **Al Dustour.** Taher Udwan said the Arab Nation is exhausted and rendered powerless vis-a-vis the continuation of atrocities and divided to an extent that it can no longer protect its interests and protect Arab kinsmen. He said the Arabs can mourn the dead and can condemn the Israelis' actions but what is important is to adopt a concerted pan-Arab action to deal with the occupation issue and to end the atrocities once and for all.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

Staggering Arab oil losses and the 'grand conspiracy'

DUE TO unfair pricing of oil in the world markets, Arab oil exporting countries lost between $420 billion to $1224 billion between the years 1987-1993, says Sa'adoun Hammadi of Iraq.

Arab oil was worth over $3 per barrel (b/d) in 1973 or $34 (b/d) in 1981. Years later, the price of oil misteriously declined in nominal terms to the current $13 p.b. While the value of the dollar itself declined to a fraction of its original value.

How much did the Arab oil producing countries lose when their present revenue in real terms is compared with the revenue they should have received, had the oil maintained its real value in line with other commodities.

This question was tackled by Dr. Hammadi, an Arab economist, who was prime-minister of Iraq in 1991, and a previous minister of oil for several years. Dr. Hammadi quantified the Arab losses resulting from oil glut caused by certain oil producers. He observed at the outset that oil is the most important source of Arab wealth, and that Arabs have the right to receive a fair price for this depletable asset. By just price, he meant maintenance of oil price in real terms, i.e., in comparison to a basket of commodities. The products that can be exchanged for a barrel of oil should be maintained over the years starting from an agreed base year.

A survey that Dr. Hammadi conducted covers Arab losses during the seven years period 1987-1993. It employs two scenarios, the first is based on the price of 1974 as a base year, and the second is based on oil prices of 1981. He used the effective exchange rate of the dollar in terms of 10 major currencies, weighted in accordance with the volume of trade of the 10 countries with the Arab World, then he calculated the rate of inflation of the basket of 10 currencies according to the weighted average of inflation rates in the 10 countries, and finally came up with a combined index to measure the real value of the current dollars and accordingly to the just price of oil in each individual year. The difference between the actual proceeds of Arab oil exports in seven years and the proceeds that should have materialised had the price of oil been in line with the price of the basket of goods is the Arab loss.

The tables produced by Dr. Hammadi show the losses per country per year, and the total Arab losses each year and for the seven years.

Total Arab losses, according to the first scenario, were found to be $412 billion, of which $88.3 billion were incurred in 1993 alone. The losses, according to the second scenario, reached $1224 billion, of which $238.3 billion happened in 1993 alone.

Kuwait, which purposely led the way toward gluting the oil market, lost $34.4 billion in the first scenario and 101.1 billion in the second.

Naturally, Saudi Arabia was the major loser of artificially depressed prices of oil. It lost $178 billion in the first scenario, of which $41 billion took place in 1993 alone; or $533 billion according to the second scenario, of which $106 billion happened in 1993 alone.

Iraq did not export oil since August 1990, yet its losses over three and a half years 1987-1990 reached $29 billion in the first scenario or $92.1 billion in the second.

One may ask: What the status of the Arab Nation would have been had an additional financial assets of $412 to $1224 billion were earned. What kind of military, economic financial and political power the Arabs could have enjoyed if oil prices were not artificially depressed due to a grand conspiracy.

Russian reform weakened from within, without

By Boris G. Fyodorov

The writer resigned last month as Russian finance minister. The article is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune.

MOSCOW — The last three years of Russian reforms were very hectic and filled with dramatic events: a couple of coups d'état, three prime ministers, five economic ministers, and so forth. Nonetheless, progress has been enormous. There are hundreds of thousands of new businesses, 86,000 privatised companies, a widespread banking system, commodity and stock exchanges, a single, market-based exchange rate, liberalised prices, more or less consistent monetary and fiscal policies.

Compare life in Russia today with the hyperinflation and empty shops in Ukraine, and you will comprehend the enormous progress that reformers achieved.

What really frustrates is misinterpretation of the situation. The opposition was very effective in promoting the idea that Russia underwent too much "shock therapy" and that reforms should be more gradual. Some people in the West, out of ignorance, took the same position.

Last year the average monthly rate of inflation in Russia was 20 per cent. Registered unemployment was less than 1 per cent. Real growth is personal income was 10 per cent. Food consumption and retail sales increased. Who in his right mind can call this shock therapy?

To the contrary, we are going too slowly, too gradually. The main problem is political will. If the president forms coalition governments that go in several different directions at the same time, if nobody takes responsibility for painful but vital measures, the situation can only deteriorate, resulting in social unrest and possibly in political upheaval.

Still, a fledgling market economy exists and responds to regulation by market policy tools. Most of the basic changes have already occurred, but we need more law and order, financial discipline, consistency in policies and fine-tuning of government measures, as well as better trained, dedicated government officials.

The days of radical steps are over. Tightening of policies macroeconomic stability, healthy currency, boosting of savings and investment, productivity, competition — these are the proper targets for 1994.

Unfortunately, a different view prevailed. Many people in high places did their best to help democratic pro-reform groups fail in the elections. Political inexperience and the inability to explain goals and results of the reforms to the population worked in the same direction.

Once the electoral failure happened, these forces came out of ambush, took off the masks and started to say that people had voted for a change of policies. Various "experts" in the West joined the chorus.

One has to live in Russia and be in the midst of events to understand the real situation. People here do not yet read political programmes, they vote emotionally; they follow personalities of the day. What we have as a result is a divided parliament which, to add insult to injury, is devoid of many powers that it previously held.

In government we got a "red" directors' junta plus a few turncoats who at long last have the clear majority and immediately initiated a turnaround in policies. Many an official had waited for this moment for two long years. It is clear that an economic coup d'état took place in Moscow in January. "Red" managers are in control and talk excitedly about more and more controls. Fixed exchange rates are advocated.

The role of the president is not clear. It is possible that he allowed the new government to have a go, taking into account the political circumstances. Probably it was unavoidable, because otherwise the myth about a "different way" would be perpetuated. At least the president so far has not supported specific ideas voiced by the government. He has a free hand to step in once the collapse starts. With his powers and authority he is the only real guarantor of reforms, the only hope Russia has before the next presidential election.

It is obvious that some of the cleverer ones are frightened. They immediately resorted to Soviet-era rhetoric, which boils down to a clear-cut division between words and deeds. One talks at the same time about at least three sets of totally incompatible inflation targets, one blathers in Davos, Switzerland, about fighting inflation and at the same time freely promises trillions to everybody. Everything is on public record. Remember that for 75 years, many words in Russia sounded the same as in the West but meant different things.

Nonetheless the uninformed Western audience, hearing familiar noises about production, investments and jobs, nods approvingly. Would they be so approving if in their own countries the whole budget deficit of 10 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) was financed by central bank credit, if productivity and efficiency were so flagrantly low?

How is the West to react to all these recent developments? There are, I believe, two possible scenarios.

First, it could be frightened by the conservative backlash and the specter of Vladimir Zhirinovsky and start pumping in money like never before. This would be similar to the late Gorbachev period, when money was lavishly flowing in with absolutely no impact on events, except to prolong the agony of the doomed regime. The only real consequence is the increased debt burden, a problem for years to come. If the International Monetary Fund (IMF) bends the rules, if some people continue "rethinking policy," Russia is in for major trouble that will inevitably affect the whole world.

There is no way one can compensate for domestic economic incompetence with external financing to such a degree that the Russian economy can avoid destruction under the pressure of hyperinflation, Communist-type industrial policy, lack of even primitive financial discipline and flagrant disregard of the law by the executive branch. More help with less reform would be a huge mistake.

The alternative scenario is for the West to be consistent and proceed in a normal way, promoting private initiatives, training people, smoothing the way for direct foreign investment. Direct financial support to the government should be conditioned on sound macroeconomic policies.

Assistance targeted at the private sector, at institutional changes, at training, at fostering the middle class should have as little link to the government as possible. The more people understand markets, work in the market institutions, the sooner economic policies will be corrected and Russia will move to a more efficient economy and higher standards of living.

New confrontation in Southern Sudan appears likely

By Jean Hélène

ALMOST 100,000 Sudanese have fled the "Three As" border region — named after the Ame, Aswa and Atepi refugee camps — where several aid agencies have been operating for the last two years.

Fleeing the bombing by Sudanese planes (48 bombs reportedly fell in the zone on Feb. 4), thousands of civilians have resumed their wanderings in this land ravaged by 11 years of war between the Muslim north and the animist and Christian south. Once more they have been caught up in the infernal cycle of attacks in the dry season which cut them off from the aid agencies providing them with their main means of survival.

The scale of the latest government assault suggests it is apparently aimed at seizing the last towns remaining in the southern guerrillas' hands. Thirteen aid organisations have had to leave the extreme south because of the fighting, the air attacks and the ban Khartoum has imposed on nearly all the sites where they had set up emergency centres.

A total of 212,000 families were getting ready this month to receive seeds and tools for planting early in March before the next rains, says Oxfam. "If the international community does not react, the millions of dollars it has spent in recent years on southern Sudan will go down the drain," warned non-governmental organisations meeting in Nairobi.

"It will have to give much more for saving the new refugees from violence and famine."

The agencies are also calling on donor countries to lean on the belligerents to spare a few "safe corridors" which are vital for transporting aid. "A pious hope," noted an observer. "It has never been possible to obtain a neutral passage through front lines. And more and more front lines are appearing following the break-up of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) into three rival factions."

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is getting ready to evacuate to its field hospital at Lokichokio in northern Kenya the wounded, most of them rebel fighters, who are arriving every day in Uganda.

Despite denials by Sudanese regime, which speaks of "clashes between various rebel groups," it is in fact a general offensive that the Sudanese army launches every year a few weeks after the rainy season ends when waterlogged routes become usable again. Aid agencies are quite familiar with the signs heralding the offensive — a troops build-up, equipment arriving in garrison towns and above all air strikes designed to sow panic among civilians.

The Pagueri refugee camp was hit on Feb. 8. The day before, 18 were reported killed after bombs were dropped on a locality called Parajog. On Feb. 4, it was the Three As area which became the target.

The exodus of refugees is causing a delicate tribal problem on the Sudanese-Ugandan border where the Acholis have never had good relations with the Dinkas who form the bulk of the displaced persons, or with SPLA leader Colonel John Garang's troops. Worse still, the SPLA has in the past raided Acholi villages and their tribal chiefs have already made it known that they will not tolerate the presence of any Dinkas in their midst.

"As a matter of fact, they don't know where to go," said Dr. Roger Teck, Médecins Sans Frontières' medical coordinator in southern Sudan. The displaced persons could all go into Uganda (the more pessimistic are bracing themselves for the arrival of 150,000 refugees). But it is more likely that they will scatter with the hope perhaps of reaching Bahr El Ghazal, which has been more or less spared in the fighting.

"We're going to have to relocate them — and that won't be easy — then start all over again," said Dr. Teck. "In southern Sudan the same emergency missions have to be carried out over and over again."

The Sudanese army is trying to cut off the rebel's supply routes. But, Pierre Saillez, head of the World Food Programme's logistics, pointed out "These same tracks, which end up in neighbouring countries, are also used by our trucks to ferry food aid to communities living along the border."

Guardian Weekly.

LETTERS

Palestinians must be protected

To the Editor:

A horrendous crime has been committed in the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron, resulting in the brutal massacre of over 60 innocent Palestinians.

Immediate drastic actions should be taken against the murderers and the United Nations peacekeeping forces should provide protection to the civilians in the West Bank from any further atrocities.

Although we are only students, we feel very strongly with our Palestinian brothers who have been subjected to an authoritarian regime which has fed Palestinian scepticism and only served to resurrect long dormant feelings of hatred towards Israelis. We hope that the politicians' euphoria, which followed recent agreements, will be subdued by this gruesome act of terrorism. We hope that serious investigations will follow this brutal crime and that the use of terminological inexactitudes and platitudes to cover up the deeds of criminals will not be used.

We trust a sense of justice and desire to uphold the values of the United Nations will prevail.

Faris Gammoh,
Linda Tarifi
and others,
Amman Baccalaureate School.

French 'sensitivities'!

To the Editor:

On FEB. 25, armed Israeli settlers attacked Palestinian civilians performing the dawn prayers in Hebron's Ibrahimi Mosque and opened fire on them. Over 60 Palestinians were killed and 270 were wounded. During the few hours following that, over 10 Palestinians demonstrating against this massacre were shot to death by Israeli soldiers.

On Feb. 13, the French minister of interior announced that Jordanians and Palestinian residents, in addition to the citizens of 12 other countries, many of them Arab, will need exit permits to leave French territories. This is in addition to the difficulties which Jordanians and Palestinians already have to go through to obtain an entry visa to France. The minister justified this decision with the pretext that these countries are considered "sensitive." On the same day, the French government exempted Israeli citizens from entry visa requirements and promised to reestablish military cooperation with Israel after a suspension which dates back to 1967.

The French government has decided to categorise a number of Arab countries as "sensitive." After the deliberate murder of Palestinian civilians, will their categorisation of Israel change?

Mohammad Al Asad,
Mary Kawar,
Amman.

King: Jordan shares Palestinians' grief

(Continued from page 1)

among the Arabs.

"What comforts us and alleviates our grief is the fact that our martyrs are now enjoying the company of God," King Hussein added.

"Jordan has faced numerous pressures, challenges and dangers in the past, and now we are confronting these pressures with clear vision and cooperation as we continue to lead others who advocate cooperation, honesty, brotherly ties commitment and reunion," the King said.

"Had I known that I constituted an obstacle in the way of an Arab meeting I would not have remained in this position one more moment and the Arab leaders have heard me express this stand," King Hussein added.

We will pursue our endeavours and will renew our call for the aspired meeting through which we hope the Arab Nation would regain its deserved position in this world," the King stressed.

"We will exert our utmost potential and do all that in our power to keep our heads high and not bowing to anybody except God Almighty. We will defend our rights firmly in the face of all attempts to infringe on them and the rights of our kinsmen and brothers in their own land."

The King said that there had been much talk about peace and "we sincerely moved towards achieving a just and comprehensive peace that would be acceptable to the coming generations and not surrender and capitulation."

"We will continue to march hand in hand in sincere unity among the true Arabs and we will continue to meet not like rulers and subjects but like brothers and kinsmen, members of a united family, shouldering the responsibility together and marching along the road towards right and justice," the King said.

His Majesty King Hussein makes a brief address during a visit he paid to the Khalil Al Rahman Society to pay condolences over the death of more than 60 Palestinians during an attack by one or more Jewish settlers in Hebron on Friday (Petra photo)

The King was accompanied by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali and Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker.

Later, in an address to Parliament members, King Hussein reiterated that Jordan was and would always be supporting the Palestinian people in Hebron, Jerusalem and every other part of the Israeli-occupied territories.

In an address at an iftar he hosted at the Royal Court in honour of members of the Lower House of Parliament, Muslim and Christian clergymen and Islamic judges from the West Bank, the King said Jordan "will do the impossible" to enable the Palestinian people to regain their legitimate rights on their national soil."

The King said any response to Friday's massacre should be well-studied "so that it bears fruitful results and enables us to shoulder our responsibilities towards all issues and control our emotions... and to be able to march on the right path hand in hand and with one heart."

The King, who along with the iftar guests performed the Maghreb and funeral prayers, stressed the importance of coordination and cooperation between the government and Parliament and called on all to "rise beyond minor issues and personal clashes which might mar Jordan's democratisation process."

King Hussein also called for having parliamentary norms and regulations that would enable deputies to contribute to shouldering their responsibilities.

He said Jordan's resumption of its democratisation process was not the result of popular pressure, but came in line with a decision taken by its leadership out of its conviction in the need to make Jordan an example and a model for other countries.

The banquet was attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Their Royal Highnesses Prince Abdullah, Prince Talal Ben Mohammad and Prince Ghazi Ben Mohammad, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Sharif Zeid and the King's advisors.

Lawmakers demand Arab-Islamic action

(Continued from page 1)

Majesty the King's and the government's constitutional right to negotiate treaties.

"I don't think that there is anybody in the house who would try to outbid His Majesty the King and the government in maintaining our national rights," Mr. Kabariti said.

IAF Deputy Bassam Omoush stood up in anger in response to Mr. Kabariti's statement saying he rejects describing the IAF request as superficial or an attempt to outbid the King.

With his band on an ashtray in front of him, Dr. Omoush shouted that Mr. Kabariti cannot categorise what other deputies say before he walked out of the session in anger after other legislators interfered to contain the argument.

In his strongest remarks to deputies yet, Mr. Masri said he would no longer tolerate the kind of disputes and heated exchanges that marred most of the House's recent sessions.

Mr. Masri said he would activate the internal regulations of the House to preempt disputes among deputies before the House preceded with the session, which was originally called for to discuss such disputes and their negative impact on the work of the legislature.

Deputy Samir Habashneh said that it was illogical to ask Jordan to withdraw from the talks unilaterally because the decision to enter them was an Arab decision. He suggested the IAF proposal be amended to call on all Arab parties to the talks to reassess their involvement in the negotiations.

Deputy Nawaf Al Qadi said the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), in its capacity as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, should decide on whether to participate on the talks or not but IAF deputies argued that the Palestinian issues is an Arab and Muslim issue on which no one has a monopoly.

The majority of deputies voted that Mr. Masri and the permanent office of the House be entrusted with issuing a House statement on the massacre after representatives of the six parliamentary blocs and other independent deputies strongly condemned it.

National Action Front bloc spokesman Fawzi Tuaimeh said the massacre was the outcome of the "Zionist ideology which is rooted in hatred and ethnic discrimination and aims at terminating the Arab existence."

He said Israeli settlements in the occupied territories must be dismantled and settlers disarmed and the United Nations must send forces to protect the Palestinians.

Speaking on behalf of the Democratic Progressive Coalition, Deputy Mohammad Daoudiyeh said the conflict with the "Zionist enemy is one of existence and not one of borders," adding that "Arab impotence has contributed to the crime."

Deputy Awad Khleifat said on behalf of the independent bloc that the Israeli authorities were totally responsible for what he called the crime [illegible] reveals the true face of Is[illegible].

Urging Arab leaders to unify their positions, Mr. Khleifat said that "peace that [illegible] supported by power will remain incomplete and will not lead" to a dignified solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

President of the National Bloc Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh urged the government to sponsor the call for an Arab summit that would study means of supporting the Palestinian people. He backed an IAF call for holding a meeting of the Arab Parliamentary Union in Amman to agree on a line of action in light of the Hebron massacre.

The Arab Parliamentary Union should call on Arab leaders to shoulder their responsibilities and "I do not say reconcile, but coordinate, in order to protect the Palestinians," said Deputy Sa'd Hayel Srour.

"The massacre is a sign of shame on the face of the Arabs," said Dr. Omoush.

Protesters vow revenge

(Continued from page 1)

Police sealed off much of downtown and traffic came to a halt while the speakers addressed the crowd.

A heavy police presence was visible all over the city. Embassies, foreign banks and many other international organisations, fearing emotional reprisals owing to their foreign affiliations, reported a security alert. The day passed without incident, however.

Numerous Amman groceries, many of them owned by natives of Hebron, closed for the entire day to mark the first day after the killings.

All shops downtown were closed and black flags flew from the shutters of many.

The crowd at the Hasbemieh Square in downtown continued their march and converged at the Roman Amphitheatre at around 1:30 p.m.and dispersed soon afterwards. The demonstrations were organised by the Islamic Action Front and a group of pan-Arab leftist parties.

Schoolchildren who were let out of school at 12:00 p.m. began demonstrations in their local neighbourhoods. Students at the University of Jordan also staged a protest.

Groups of 40 to 60 schoolchildren could be seen Saturday in various parts of Sbmeisani, Downtown, Jabal Taj and Joffe, Garden Street and Bayader Wadi Seer as well as the Baqaa and Wahdat camps raising the Palestinian flag and shouting slogans to protest Friday's killings.

A scene from Saturday's demonstration in Baqaa camp (photo by Yousef Al 'Allan)

A group of some 60 students with green arm bands shouting "there is no god but God," converged on the closed American embassy in Abdoun in the morning hours but were turned back by American embassy guards and police. It was the first reported group of protestors to converge on the embassy, built two years ago. the group left no statement and did not identify themselves, according to embassy staff.

Jordanian papers ran eight column headlines of Friday's killing with explicit pictures of the victims. Akher Khabar, a liberal Jordanian daily, ran one of the most stunning headlines — "shalom" — across its front-page along with a blown-up picture of a dead man with his mouth open and blood running out.

The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, Saturday vowed to step up the armed struggle against Israel and carry out revenge attacks for Friday's killings.

"Yes to the revolution of the knives," Hamas spokesman Mohammad Nazzal told a press conference.

The movement called on the Palestine Liberation Organisation to immediately withdraw from the negotiations with Israel.

"We call on Arafat to withdraw and for the negotiators to withdraw immediately," said one head of Hamas in Jordan, Ibrahim Ghosbeh. "The Palestinian people know who they are and where they are," he said of negotiators living in the West Bank and Amman. "It is clear that the negotiation option is not the option of the Palestinian people but a people-less leadership in Tunis.

"It is a shame that Arafat is planning to go to Washington with 30 people before the blood of the martyrs has even had the chance to dry. It shows his disrespect for the suffering of his people," Mr. Ghosheh added.

"Rabin is responsible for security and occupation. So this is his domain," concluded Mr. Ghosheh. "But the blood of the Palestinian people will be avenged."

PLO: No talks unless demands met

(Continued from page 1)

the PLO looks as if it is ignoring what happened yesterday..."

He said the PLO had entered the peace process but Israel practised terrorism. "How one can negotiate in such atmosphere? We have recalled our delegations to Tunis."

For talks to resume he said the U.N. Security Council should decide on the safety of Palestinians and the dismantlement of Jewish settlements.

"This is a Palestinian holocaust ... the United States comes to cover this crime with an invitation to negotiations. This is not the question. There should be a guarantee of international protection for our isolated people in the occupied territories who face the Israeli military machine provided by the United States," Mr. Kaddoumi added.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat said earlier Saturday he would consider the U.S. proposal to switch the peace talks with Israel to Washington, but added the peace process has "lost its credibility" after Friday's massacre.

"I am not against the meeting, but I want to know first what is in the platform," Mr. Arafat told French television networks TF1 and France 2.

"All the peace process had already lost its credibility, and especially after the massacre," Mr. Arafat said.

He said the killing was "a conspiracy between settlers and the army," disputing the Israeli government claim that it was done by a lone lunatic settler.

"No one alone can kill 60 and injure 256, no one, there is no Rambo," he said. "They were more than ten," including an army reserve officer, Mr. Arafat said.

Mr. Arafat said he expected a resurgence of violence in the occupied territories. "There will be retaliation, and no one can predict its extent," he warned.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres on Sunday rejected outright the call for international forces to be deployed in the territories.

He said the atmosphere at the PLO headquarters in Tunis was very "tense."

Mr. Arafat has summoned all the Palestinian negotiators to a meeting on Sunday in Tunis to discuss the U.S. invitation for talks in Washington, and the next moves after the Hebron massacre.

Israel meanwhile pledged to turn the carnage in Hebron into a catalyst for peace.

"Paradoxically the tragedy leaves Israel and the PLO no alternative but to accelerate the peace negotiations so that the PLO can take control in the territories as soon as possible," an Israeli minister, who asked not to be named, told AFP.

The minister said "damage control" contacts over the last 24 hours between Israel and the PLO as well as with the Americans and Europeans had proved positive.

"Everyone agrees that we have to push ahead with peace," the minister said. "The negotiations could go very fast now."

He said there was no problem with the Palestinian leadership, "what we fear is the Palestinian street."

"The coming days will be crucial. Things could get out of control in the territories."

For that reason, on top of international condemnation. Israel was under great pressure to come up with some real gestures such as an early release of Palestinian prisoners, to keep a lid on the violence, he said. Israel was weighing its next move, the minister added.

A statement by Fateh in Gaza urged Mr. Arafat to suspend peace talks with Israel.

"We call on the Palestinian leadership to suspend the current negotiations with Israel," said a statement signed by "the Palestinian National Liberation Movement — Fateh" and sent to Reuters in Gaza.

"(We) affirm that the basic options of our people lie in continuing the struggle, escalating the uprising and responding with various means to the crime of occupation."

PLO sources in Tunis spoke of growing pressure among the Palestinian leadership for concessions from Israel.

Abdullah Hourani, an Executive Committee member who suspended his membership because he disagreed with the strategy of negotiating with Israel, said Palestinians were unanimous that talks should halt until Israeli settlements are dismantled.

"There is a national unanimity on the necessity of reviewing the negotiations policy and the leadership has to respond to it," Mr. Hourani told Reuters. "The PLO should pull out from the talks ... and put as a condition for resuming them the withdrawal of the settlers and dismantling of settlements."

In Amman, Suleiman Najjab, one of 12 active members of the Executive Committee, also called on Mr. Arafat to suspend peace talks until Palestinians in the territories were protected.

Faisal Husseini, head of the PLO's Fateh faction in the occupied West Bank, said fresh talks should cover the final status of the occupied territories rather than leave that until a later stage as envisaged in the September agreement between the PLO and Israel on Palestinian self-rule.

Besides the negotiators' meeting, the PLO has mounted a diplomatic drive to seek support. On Saturday it called an urgent meeting of the Arab League to discuss the massacre.

The PLO earlier called on the U.N. Security Council to take "concrete steps quickly to guarantee international protection" for the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

The Security Council met Friday but was divided on what action to take and was to continue the debate Saturday.

Arab and Muslim members have called for a resolution condemning the killings, while the United States is seeking to limit the reaction to a statement.

The resolution proposed by the PLO condemns the massacre and calls for Israel to take immediate action to end settlers' attacks in the occupied territories.

The U.S. statement calls the attack an act of terrorism and calls on the Israeli government to take urgent action to protect the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

French President Mitterrand has sent a letter to Mr. Arafat and Mr. Rabin following the massacre, his office said Saturday.

Mr. Mitterrand's office gave no details of the letter's contents.

Soldiers killed several

(Continued from page 1)

"According to the first investigations, it was a single person who acted on his own initiative," he said.

One Palestinian witness backed the loner story saying Goldstein, branded a psychopath by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, changed his bullet clip three times.

Experts said a 35-bullet clip can be changed in a few seconds on the Galil rifle which could easily kill that amount of people in a closed space.

Military officials said about 100 bullet casings from the gun of the doctor were found in the mosque.

Dressed in his reserve major's uniform, he also threw at least three grenades, witnesses said, which was supported by the wounds sustained by some of the scores injured.

The army has still not published an official statement or death toll, but military officials did say Goldstein was beaten to death with iron rods by worshippers.

However, Palestinian taxi driver Asbraf Mitzab said troops fired teargas and then live bullets.

"An Israeli came into the mosque. He was dressed in military clothes and... he began shooting from the back... and had time to change the clip on his gun and continue shooting," Mr. Mitzab told the Palestinian Human Rights Information Centre.

"People tried to run away but soldiers came into the mosque and used tear-gas at the entrance and also opened fire at people.

"It was impossible to tell who was shot by the settler and who by the soldiers. It all happened at the same time."

Israelis kill 3 more

(Continued from page 1)

belonged. The cabinet will meet Sunday to decide.

Soldiers closed off the mosque inside the Cave of the Patriarchs, a site holy to both Muslims and Jews.

The imam, unable to lead prayers in his mosque, joined mourners at wakes within sight of the imposing Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba, home to Goldstein.

Mourners, including local Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Mohammad Hourani, said the peace Israel hoped to negotiate would never come until such settlements were cleared.

"The killing has shown that the way we are negotiating with the Israelis cannot go on," Mr. Hourani said, his remarks twice punctuated by the popping of Israeli tear-gas canisters fired at stonethrowers. "We have agreed to an interim phase in which the settlers can stay ... that means they can go on killing us and the peace."

The dovish Israeli pressure group Peace Now agreed, calling for the evacuation of settlements in the heart of Hebron.

"This is the peace we are having with Israel?" asked Sharban Natsche, who lost a brother and two other relatives in the mosque. "The killing has been as bad since Oslo," he said, referring to the Norwegian-brokered peace deal between Israel and the PLO signed last September but still not implemented.

Mr. Hourani said only the release of Palestinian prisoners and an Israeli commitment to remove settlers could stem the erosion of popular Palestinian support for the stalled accord.

Mourners agreed as they heard of yet further Arab deaths on Saturday. Palestinians said the army shot dead a total of three protesters in clashes near Jerusalem, the West Bank town of Tulkarm and Gaza, Arab sources said.

On the Gaza Strip youths spearheaded street confrontations in defiance of a curfew, lobbing rocks and burning tyres, correspondents said.

Soldiers shot dead a 16-year-old in Gaza City and wounded 18 more on the strip while a 15-year-old was killed by border police fire in East Jerusalem.

Troops also shot dead an 18-year-old during confrontations at Tulkarem refugee camp on the West Bank.

Arabs, Muslims enraged, demand action

(Continued from page 1)

PLO would ask the Arab League to adopt a common stance to push Israel into disarming the settlers in the occupied territories.

Sunday's meeting would be held at the level of permanent delegates to the Arab League.

Demonstrations condemning the massacre were held in several capitals.

In Cairo 10,000 Egyptian University students denounced Zionism and demanded revenge for the massacre victims.

Demonstrations were also reported in the Libyan capital Tripoli, while special services were held in the mosques throughout the Arab Gulf states.

Outraged Arab leaders urged Israel and the international community to act swiftly to halt violence by Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Yemen and the United Arab Emirates all pinned the blame squarely on Israel, accusing the authorities of failing to protect the Palestinians. (see page 2)

Hundreds of riot police blocked a road from Cairo University to the Israeli embassy to keep away students protesting the massacre.

But the deaths drew harsh reactions not only from students but from Egyptian officials and political leaders.

It also spurred jitters that the peace process could be jeopardised and that Egypt, the only Arab country officially at peace in the Middle East, could be a big loser because of its major role in promoting it.

Foreign Minister Amr Musa told reporters the massacre was "a criminal act from all angles. There can't be any excuse for that." He blamed "the occupation authorities for not protecting those living under occupation" and said the incident has harmed the peace process.

"Its repetition could totally kill it," he said.

Although there was no mention of a specific threat, security was tightened at Israel's El Al airlines office at Cairo international airport and around the Israeli embassy to deter revenge attacks.

The demonstration by Cairo University students, organised by Islamic groups, began early Saturday, they chanted slogans demanding that Cairo sever relations with Israel and expel the Jewish state's ambassador.

"Muslims are getting killed everywhere and nobody cares for us. They treat us like dogs," one angry student said.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak called for Security Council action to protect Palestinians.

"President Hosni Mubarak condemned the unpleasant incident at the Hebron mosque and supported the call for an immediate meeting for the Security Council to take necessary measures to protect the Palestinians," Mr. Amr Musa told reporters.

He said Mr. Mubarak received a telephone call from Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin expressing his "sorrow for the incident and hoping it would not affect the peace efforts."

He said President Bill Clinton also called Mr. Mubarak about Friday's shooting.

Black flags fluttered throughout the occupied territories and in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, which were paralysed by a general strike Saturday as Palestinians mourned the massacre victims.

Lebanon declared next Thursday a day of national mourning.

In Damascus, an official spokesman said Israel's "stubborn positions, its expansionist ambitions and policy of prevarication in the peace process" provoked the massacre, and Israel was "directly or indirectly responsible for extremism in the region."

A senior Iraqi official urged Palestinians to "step up the intifada," in the occupied territories, which began in December 1987.

The hardline fundamentalist Islamic Jihad in Palestine group vowed to avenge the massacre, in a statement released in Beirut.

And in Baghdad, the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) led by Mahmoud Abbas called for a resumption of the armed struggle and an end to negotiations with Israel.

"Our revenge for this ugly massacre will be twofold," said a hooded guerrilla brandishing an AK-47 assault rifle in 'Ain Al Hilweh in South Lebanon. "We tell the Israeli army... we will respond by firing on them wherever they are."

The protestors — chanting slogans denouncing the PLO-Israeli peace deal and calling Mr. Arafat a "pig" and "the enemy of God" — set ablaze tyres at the entrance of 'Ain Al Hilweh refugee camp near the southern port of Sidon.

In Syria, thousands of supporters of a 10-member Palestinian alliance opposed to the peace deal and other groups marched through the streets of the Yarmouk refugee camp near Damascus chanting slogans condemning Israel.

Representatives of Palestinian women, youth and labour organisations also staged a sit-in strike at the Damascus offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to demand world action "to put an end to Israel's crimes."

In Algeria, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said:

"Algeria forcefully condemns this crime and appeals to the United Nations Security Council to take steps to ensure the protection and security of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and prevent the recurrence of such acts."

The Yemeni Foreign Ministry said in a statement that news of the "heinous crime" was "received with deep disgust and pain."

Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim nation, condemned the "brutal" killing in Hebron.

"The slaughter was a cruel criminal act against innocent people in the midst of their worship, whoever the perpetrator, the government of Israel is fully responsible," a foreign ministry statement said.

China condemned the murder as a "serious terrorist act of violence" and said it showed the need for a just resolution to the Palestinianissue.

"The Chinese government is greatly shocked at and sternly condemns this serious terrorist act of violence, and expressed sympathy to the families of the innocent victims," a Foreign Ministry spokesman told the official Xinhua news agency.

"We call on the Israeli authorities to take all necessary measures to stop such acts of violence," the spokesman said.

Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto deplored and condemned the killing as a "dastardly" act of sacrilege "symptomatic of religious intolerance which we have recently witnessed against Muslims in Palestine, Bosnia and Kashmir."

In Paris, about 200 people demonstrated against the killing.

The rally near the Eiffel Tower was organised by the French Communist Party (PCF) and pro-Palestinian and human rights groups.

In Dhaka, Bangladesh, more than 2,000 Muslims demonstrated against the massacre.

The protestors raised clenched fists while shouting "Down with Zionism" and "Muslims of the world unite against Jewish conspiracy."

هكذا من الأصل

Experts urge private investment in Palestinian territories

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Officials from the United State and Israel have joined a Palestinian expert in urging private American investors to explore opportunities in the West Bank and Gaza.

Emphasising the connection between economic growth and political stability, Anees Barghouti, director of the Washington-based Palestine Affairs Centre, urged potential investors to consider the humanitarian side of doing business in the occupied territories. "The risk is worth taking," he said. "You won't only be making profits."

He spoke during a luncheon organised by the District of Columbia Bar for the benefit of attorneys and clients who either have interest in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, or are exploring the opportunities now available there. Mr. Barghouti was joined on the panel by Amnon Neubach, an economics minister at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, and Karl Reiner, an acting deputy assistant secretary at the Commerce Department.

Mr. Reiner noted that the process of implementing the Israeli-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) declaration has been more difficult than expected. The planned Israeli pullout of Gaza and Jericho is two months overdue, and Israelis and Palestinians remain wary of one another and of their respective proposals for regional economic cooperation. "There is no doubt," he said, "that political issues are hindering progress in the economic sphere."

At the same time, interest in regional business opportunities "is increasing," Mr. Reiner said. He illustrated the point by noting that: Construction firms are positioning themselves to work with local contractors on infrastructure projects in the territories; three firms have received permits for concrete plants in Gaza, where about 20 apartment buildings in the 20-story range are already under construction; an entrepreneur from Gaza has inquired about an American fast-food franchise; and other executives have asked about licensing arrangements in road construction and engineering.

Mr. Reiner added that the medical and building material sectors are expected to grow rapidly, once implementation of the Israel-PLO accord takes effect.

Promoting the economic growth necessary to support the peace process will be difficult, "but we are not working in a vacuum," Mr. Reiner said. "This is not the first time two hostile parties have decided to make peace, and — however difficult — economic development is not uncharted."

He pointed out that both the World Bank and a group of Israeli, Palestinian, Jordanian and American economists had analysed the regional economy and established guidelines for cooperation. They and other experts agree, Mr. Reiner said, on the necessity of open markets.

"The parties involved in this evolving economic relationship cannot afford to isolate themselves. Free trade and open markets are necessary to stimulate the private sector and support economic growth," he said.

Although Palestinians might be tempted to support a total cutoff from Israel, such a course would be counterproductive, Mr. Reiner said. Among other things, they need to avail themselves of the Israeli job market, he pointed out.

"While the Palestinians must have the freedom to develop their own policies, what they do in the first one or two years will be extremely important, because it's going to the psychological stage for or against economic expansion," the U.S. official said.

Mr. Barghouti told the gathering that in addition to establishing an independent state, the Palestinians are "determined" to create an economic confederation with Jordan which could eventually include Israel.

Like Mr. Reiner, he listed a number of areas that potential investors ought to explore, including the sectors of tourism, transportation, agriculture, housing and water and sewage treatment. Mr. Barghouti noted that the Palestinian economy needs to be reconstructed from top to bottom, having been "literally devastated" by the Israeli occupation.

Any help from investors — technical or otherwise — "is welcome," Mr. Barghouti said. He warned that support among Palestinians for the Israel-PLO declaration has dropped as the talks on implementation have lagged. "Palestinians need to see improvement on the ground," he said, if they are to maintain faith in the political process.

Although he approached the issue from a different perspective, Mr. Neubach agreed that the occupied territories — especially Gaza — are in "desperate" need of innvestment. "The need is huge. Everything has to be built from scratch," he said.

On particular points, however, he disagreed with Mr. Barghouti. For example, he said that proposals for building a seaport in Gaza or for new international airports in Gaza and possibly Jerusalem are misguided.

"The most important need is for infrastructure" he said. "They don't need flags and they don't need symbols — they need food and jobs and houses and education," Mr. Neubach said of the Gaza Palestinians.

Mr. Neubach also made a pitch for investors to consider opportunities in Israel, particularly the medical, telecommunications, transportation and tourist industries.

Bank of Greece will follow tight monetary policy in 1994

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — The Central Bank of Greece has said it will follow a tight monetary policy for 1994 and strive to help the government bring inflation into the single digits by the end of the year.

"Slowing inflation will be the focus of our policy. That will be the bank's central direction," Governor Ioannis Boutos told a news conference.

He said the bank will also try to restrict total credit expansion from six to eight per cent, down from 13.1 per cent in 1993, in order to curb an increase in the money supply.

Mr. Boutos added that the bank's exchange policy will focus on allowing a drachma slide to help deflation. He said the slide would reflect the difference in inflation rates between Greece and other EU countries.

Inflation was running at 11.1 per cent in January, more than three times the EU average of 3.3 per cent, and Mr. Boutos said he hoped it would drop to about 10 in the next two months. He said the drachma slid 13.9 per cent against the dollar in 1993 and 6.65 per cent against the European Currency Unit (ECU). The central bank's discount rate has been 21.5 per cent.

Mr. Boutos said interest rates would continue to drop during the year, but the decrease would depend on achieving lower inflation and tight exchange practices.

But he said Greece would have to retain slightly higher interest rates until after July — when currency controls are to be deregulated — in order to prevent capital flight.

The governor added that interest rates would also be affected by Greece's outstanding short-term debt obligation, which the government has placed at 2.5 trillion drachma ($10 billion). The public debt was nearly 20 trillion ($80 billion) in 1993.

His statements came a week after Moody's Investors Service Inc. said it was downgrading its rating on the Bank of Greece's foreign currency debt. The bank had acted as the issuer on about $10 billion on behalf of the government until January 1994.

Moody's pointed to a continued deterioration of fiscal balances, exacerbated by a rapidly growing debt burden. It added that substantial fiscal reforms needed to counter the deterioation were unlikely to be implemented in the short term due to the lack of political will.

The government is planning to submit new tax legislation

Jobless rate in Spain nears 24%

MADRID (AFP) — Spain had 3.68 million unemployed workers at the end of last year, 23.90 per cent of the work force against a rate of 20.08 per cent at end-1992, the economics ministry has announced in Madrid.

Spain has the highest jobless rate of all 12 European Union countries.

The number of unemployed workers rose by 635,000 last year and by 136,000 during the last quarter of last year, even though economic growth was not negative in that quarter for the first time since the end of 1992.

According to the Bank of Spain, Spanish gross domestic product dropped by 0.9 per cent last year in real terms.

Economics Minister Pedro Soilbes said that unemployment would continue to rise.

Tunisia to open currencies market on first of March

TUNIS (R) — Tunisia, in a move toward a more outward-looking financial policy, is to open a domestic foreign exchange market on March 1, Central Bank of Tunisia (BCT) officials said.

The market, to be established between banks, will permit quoting of foreign currencies against the Tunisian dinar, up to now a monopoly of the central bank.

The change is part of financial reforms which last year established currency convertibility for capital account transactions for non-residents and eased restrictions over capital transactions by residents.

"This new step in the financial liberalisation aims at removing all obstacles in the way of the firms' operations and at intergrating the Tunisian economy into the international market," said Mrabet, director-general of BCT's external finances, told Reuters.

He said it was made possible by a positive performance of the convertibility reform introduced last year.

"We didn't see a drain of capital as a result of convertibility. Our currency increased to 930 million dinars ($930 million) on Dec. 31, 1993 from 850 million dinars ($850 million) on Dec. 31, 1992," Mr. Mrabet said.

"We have observed that economic operators and citizens are behaving more rationally in their external expenses, and this encourages us to go forward in the financial liberalisation," he said.

Currencies rates will be set by the market each business day, BCT officials said. Until now they have been set each week by BCT on the basis of a basket of currencies of the main trade partners of Tunisia.

"Starting of March 1, is up to the market to set up the rates. If a bank comes to us and ask to buy or sell a currency, our response will be go to the market," Brahim Hajji, head of the BCT's department which supervise the new exchange market, told Reuters.

He said BCT would continue to have its own reference rates, based on the market rates and taking account of the North African country's macro-economic objectives.

The market will be for cash exchanges and banking, but not speculative transactions, Mr. Hajji added.

Central bank governor Beji Hamda said in a note to bankers that offshore banks were authorised to enter the market for their residents operations only.

Recession-hit Fiat to shed 16,300 jobs

ROME (AFP) — Italian conglomerate Fiat is to shed 16,300 jobs under a two-year accord to revive the recession-hit firm agreed by directors and unions, the company said Saturday.

The job cuts, which involve a package of early retirements and long-term layoffs funded jointly by the company and the state, were approved by Fiat employees in a secret ballot, the firm said.

They were announced in the wake of massive company losses which reached 1,800 billion lire ($1.05 billion) in 1993.

The accord, which was agreed at the beginning of the week, was signed overnight Friday in the presence of Employment Minister Gino Giugni.

As of the end of 1993, Fiat was active in a variety of sectors, including industrial vehicles, farm machinery, metalwork, electronics, robotics, publishing and insurance.

Its workforce was 261,500, including 120,330 in the auto construction sector.

Under the accord, 8,800 mostly auto construction staff will lose their jobs by 1996, including 6,600 who will take early retirement funded by the state to the tune of 150 billion lire ($90 million).

The other 2,200 will receive a guaranteed monthly income of around 1.1 million lire ($700) — equivalent to half the average wage for a Fiat worker — until retirement.

British companies try to placate Malaysia

LONDON (R) — Companies likely to suffer under a Malaysian trade boycott of Britain tried to repair the rift Saturday by praising Kuala Lumpur's achievements and echoing its government's attacks on the British media.

Sixteen firms with large investments in the rapidly developing country embarked on a "charm offensive" of newspaper tributes in an apparent effort to assuage the anger of the Malaysian government over its image in the British press.

"We are proud to work in Malaysia," said a full-page advertisement in several newspapers that featured corporate logos from big-name companies including aircraft maker British Aerospace, construction and cable firm BICC Group and construction groups Blue Circle Industries and Trafalgar House.

"We want to put on record how proud we are to work with the Malaysian government and the Malaysian private sector," it said.

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad ordered the boycott after British press reports alleged that Anglo-Malaysian trade was tainted by corruption and an illicit deal to link an aid grant for a dam with a big arms deal.

Kuala Lumpur was particularly angered by a report in the London Sunday Times alleging bribes to Malaysian officials.

Some of the same companies that ran the newspaper ads wrote a letter to the Sunday Times's sister paper complaining that "ill-informed and tendencious" articles had put billons of pounds (dollars) worth of British contracts at risk.

"Malaysia has an excellent record of economic growth and provides a fine example to the world of racial harmony and political stability," said the letter in the Times.

British officials were also trying to defuse the row through diplomatic channels and were considering sending a high-ranking "emissary" to Kuala Lumpur to appeal to Mr. Mahathir to reconsider his trade freeze.

But they could not confirm a report in the Financial Times newspaper that former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, whose rapport with Mr. Mahathir in the 1980s ended an earlier rift and eased the way for the Pergau dam project, was offering to help.

"We have had no approach from Lady Thatcher," one said.

The dam, being built with a £234 million ($346.6 million) aid grant, is at the centre of the "arms-for-aid controversy" which led to British companies being barred from any new government contracts. Critics allege the aid payment, Britain's biggest ever, was a secret "sweetener" for a 1988 arms deal in which Malaysia bought British fighter aircraft worth nearly £1 billion ($1.5 billion).

The Guardian newspaper reported Saturday that British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd was planning to announce changes to the system this week which would limit aid to very poor countries, disqualifying countries like Malaysia.

But a foreign office spokesman said Britain announced last year that it wanted to restrict aid to very needy countries and to much smaller payments than for Pergau.

Publi-Graphics Dubai names new regional managing director

DUBAI — Roger Swann from London has joined Publi-Graphics Dubai as regional managing director responsible for its operations in Dubai and expansion into neighbouring markets. These include Publi-Graphics Dubai, Publi-Graphics Creative Sales Division and Public Relations Division, Oman, Iran and Pakistan. Mr. Swann has previously worked for McCann Ericson, RSCG and most recently EUROCOM where he was responsible for international client development and coordination throughout their network of offices worldwide.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY FEBRUARY 27, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: A day of many moods and different activities, so make a point to keep calm and unperturbed as possible. See that everything is in its right place and working normally. Show consideration to others?

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Take time for meditation early in the day and adopt the right philosophy for the future. Make this a worthwhile day for all that are around you.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Study your relationship with friends and know where they fit best in your future plans. Catch up on your rest today so you will be fresh for next week.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Seek the company of influential persons who can be helpful in furthering your career. Devote this evening to loved one and much happiness abounds.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Plan how to advance through the auspices of important and clever individuals you know. Strive for happiness in your everyday life.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) A good time to make plans that could give you more abundance in the days ahead. Don't be taken in by doubtful persons who could cause you misery.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Plan how to gain more benefits from relationship you now have. Forget that easy chair and be more active and happy on this most beneficial day.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) A good day to come to a better understanding with family members. Plan how to show gratitude and increase harmony to some enterprising person.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Arrange to be with friends you truly like for the recreation you desire. Plan the week ahead so that it becomes more productive in any project you are involved with.

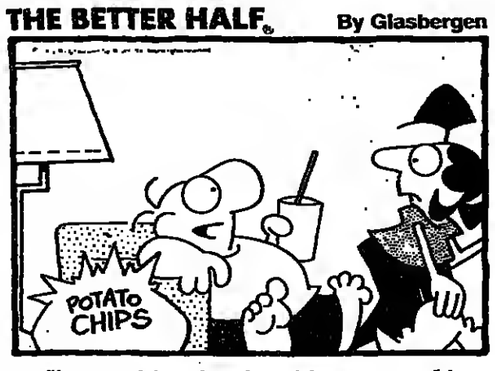
SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Make plans to improve your status is your line of endeavour. Take mate out of charming places in the evening and you will be much loved.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Good day to study whatever is spiritual and educational. Visit friends and relatives and express happiness in being in their company.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Study new methods and ideas that can bring you greater income in the future. Make needed repairs to propeny which have been but aside.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Make the right arrangements for gaining personal aims. The evening is best for being with persons you enjoy the company of seeing.

THE BETTER HALF® By Glasbergen

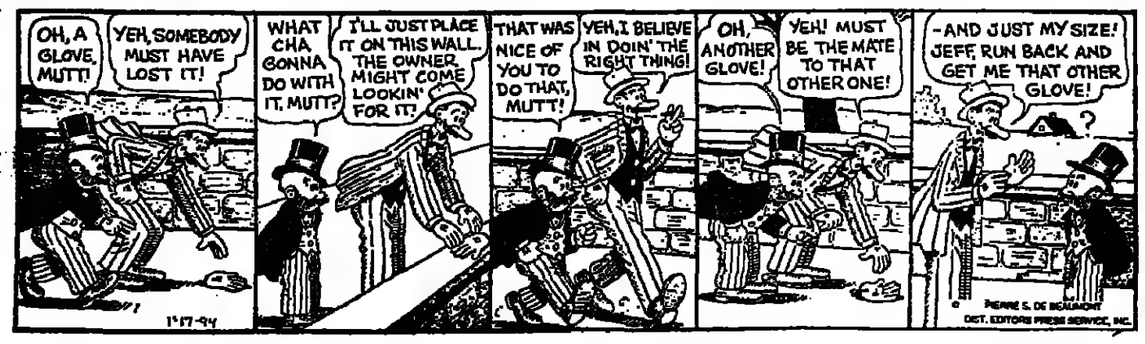


"I gave blood today. I better avoid housework for a few weeks so I don't pass out."

Peanuts

Andy Capp

Mutt'n'Jeff



JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

RINBY

IRATT

TRAMPE

VERDIF

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

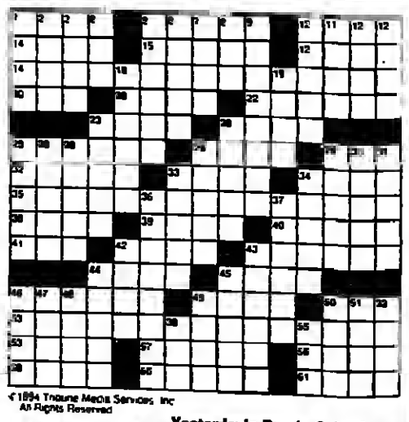
Print answer here:

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: JERKY BEFOG AGHAST PREACH

Answer: What she got from the electrician's bill — AFTER SHOCK

THE Daily Crossword by Melvin Kenworthy



ACROSS
1 Not clearly defined
5 One-time Russian pianist Gabrilowitsch
10 Incandescence
14 Double curve
15 Valerie Harper TV role
16 "I could — horse!"
17 Embodiment
20 Tokyo, once
21 Carry on
22 Turkish inn
23 Ballet jump
24 "Tha pity —, Iago!"
25 Run
28 Remitted
29 Little, to Burns
32 — acid
33 Attractive
34 Pentacle
35 Elite stationery
38 Pub drinks
39 Stats for Olerud
40 Paradise beauty
41 Legal matter
42 Pickle type
43 Sea god
44 Eng composer
45 Author Ambler
46 Universal
49 Footnote word
50 Youth org
53 Smart alecks
56 Cash drawer
57 Attack
58 Swearword
59 Only
60 Glacial term
61 Roentgen discovery

DOWN
1 Kind of chest
2 Like fine wine
3 Zilch
4 Affirmative
5 Showy
6 Take a — to (like)
7 Yielding
9 — Aman
9 Baby's mouthpiece?
10 Reach
11 Leo's pad
12 Indian
13 Kind of ad
18 Beaver State
19 Surrounded by
23 Fonda and Eyre
24 Joyce Carol —
25 Of a cheekbone
26 "...is as good as —"
27 Orioles and Blue Jays
28 Student
29 Obese
30 Large: pref.
31 Actor Alan or Adam
33 Wire
34 Unemotional
36 Di is one
37 Scampi item
42 Dull person
43 Special delights
44 Sufficient
45 Ferber and Mills
46 Avoirdupois units: abbr.
47 Buckeye State
48 Window part
49 Ratio phrase
50 Tolerate
51 Spanish maiden: abbr.
52 Pale
54 Not working: abbr.
56 Small suffix?

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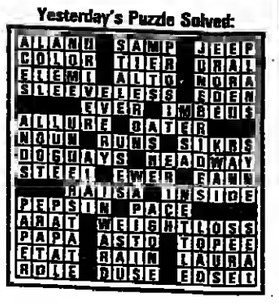
Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:



Bad debt disposals by Japanese banks reach $22 billion

TOKYO (AFP) — Disposals of bad loans by Japanese banks grew 8.5 per cent from the end of December to 2.390 billion yen ($22.1 billion) at the end of January. Cooperative Credit Purchasing Co. Ltd. has said.

The company, set up by Japanese banks at the beginning of last year to clean up their balance sheets, has now paid 1,308 billion yen for 993 non-performing loans acquired since March, representing 55 per cent of their face value.

The recovery of non-performing loans, defined as those on which interest has not been paid for six months or more, came to 150 billion yen at the end of January. Of the 150 billion yen, the company said it had raised 135 billion yen from 48 sales of property held as collateral against bad loans.

In January alone, the bad-loan vehicle acquired non-performing debts worth 187.6 billion yen for 98.8 billion yen, representing almost 53 per cent of their combined face value, up from 45 per cent in December.

Recoveries came to 31.7 billion yen with the company raising 30.7 billion yen from the sale of six properties.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHMEISANI
TELEPHONE: 663170 / 663170
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 26/02/1994

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADED VOLUME JD	PREV CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK	19,300	393.000	391.000	393.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	31,805	7.920	7.950	7.960
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	200,276	2.183	2.180	2.180
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	25,379	3.500	3.450	3.470
THE HOUSING BANK	12,637	6.350	6.345	6.340
JORDAN KUWAIT BANK	26,966	3.230	3.210	3.200
JORDAN GULF BANK	31,265	2.160	2.170	2.190
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	2,216	4.433	4.442	4.400
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK/NEW	197,022	4.270	4.263	4.260
UNION BANK FOR SAVINGS & INVESTMENT	11,898	5.110	5.190	5.103
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	73,333	8.450	8.450	8.490
BEIT ELMAL SAVINGS&INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	2,102	4.643	4.632	4.600
[illegible] BANK FOR INVESTMENT	595,795	2.065	2.082	2.092
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	20,493	2.390	2.365	2.360
GENERAL ARABIA INSURANCE	21,033	3.750	3.750	3.710
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	37,453	3.700	3.700	3.680
ARAB LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE	590	2.970	2.950	2.950
AL NISR AL-ARABI INSURANCE	797	4.850	4.800	4.800
JORDAN ELECTRIC POWER	20,106	2.370	2.356	2.360
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	8,159	4.950	4.955	4.930
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	6,190	2.400	2.403	2.400
JORDAN TOURISM & SPA COMPLEX	1,492	0.781	0.785	0.770
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	2,492	4.403	4.431	4.435
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	1,750	1.760	1.750	1.753
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	1,050	1.560	1.563	1.500
[illegible], PRINTING & MAINTENANCE	797	1.115	1.111	1.130
JORDAN PRESS FOUNDATION / ALRAI	953	13.700	13.700	13.700
JORDAN PRESS & PUBLISHING /AD-DUSTOUR	5,964	14.710	14.900	15.000
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMODORE HOTELS	11,066	2.210	2.233	2.240
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	12,150	3.780	3.780	3.770
ATTANQEEB CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	1,253	1.700	1.675	1.670
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	64,870	3.150	3.150	3.150
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	3,125	10.400	10.390	10.390
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	713	7.100	7.150	7.150
THE JORDAN WORSTED MILLS	102,063	12.500	12.550	12.700
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	24,646	7.850	7.850	7.843
JORDAN CERAMIC INDUSTRIES	1,438	6.450	6.400	6.400
THE JORDAN PIPES MANUFACTURING	30,045	4.590	4.560	4.550
SPINNING & WEAVING	685	2.770	2.740	2.740
RAFIA INDUSTRIES	6,170	3.160	3.073	1.070
JORDAN GLASS INDUSTRIES	2,413	0.360	0.350	0.360
DAR AL DAWA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	383,704	18.200	17.900	18.000
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	575	2.270	2.300	2.300
ARAB ALUMINIUM INDUSTRY	44,020	10.180	10.100	10.200
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	760	1.560	1.530	1.530
JORDAN MEDICAL CORPORATION	14,867	0.460	0.460	0.480
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	5,150	5.180	5.150	5.250
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	843	1.380	3.375	3.370
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	4,000	8.000	8.000	8.000
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JIMCO	1,745	1.175	1.160	1.170
JORDAN POULTRY CO. FOR AGRI. & FOOD PROD.	1,906	1.245	1.230	1.230
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	267,655	5.810	5.814	5.810
GRAND TOTAL	2,371,500			

Financial Markets

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U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date 24 2 94	Close Date 25 2 94
Sterling Pound	1.4850	1.4865
Deutsche Mark	1.7169	1.7110
Swiss Franc	1.4512	1.4295
French Franc	5.8850	5.8100
Japanese Yen	104.90	104.80
European Currency Unit	1.1322**	1.1305

USD Per SDR
European Opening at 9:00 a.m. GMT

Eurocurrency Interest Rates Date: 25 2 1994

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	3.1875	3.4375	3.5625	4.0000
Sterling Pound	4.875	4.875	4.875	4.9475
Deutsche Mark	5.875	5.6875	5.500	5.1875
Swiss Franc	4.000	3.875	3.8125	3.6575
French Franc	6.0625	6.000	5.8125	5.5625
Japanese Yen	2.0625	2.0625	2.0000	2.0000
European Currency Unit	6.3000	6.2500	6.0200	5.6900

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent

Precious Metals Date: 25 2 1994

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	379.10	7.45	Silver	5.25	0.120

21 Karat

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 26 2 1994

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6980	0.7000
Sterling Pound	1.0360	1.0432
Deutsche Mark	0.4076	0.4096
Swiss Franc	0.4881	0.4905
French Franc	0.1201	0.1207
Japanese Yen	0.6655	0.6686
Dutch Guilder	0.3637	0.3655
Swedish Krona	*****	*****
Italian Lira	0.0414	0.0416
Belgian Franc	*****	*****

Per 100

Other Currencies Date: 26 2 1994

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.8320	1.8460
Lebanese Lira	0.0405e5	0.041545
Saudi Riyal	0.1856	0.1867
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3360	2.3600
Qatari Riyal	0.1895	0.1905
Egyptian Pound	0.2050	0.2200
Omani Riyal	1.7900	1.8060
UAE Dirham	0.1895	0.1905
Greek Drachma	0.2735	0.3165
Cypriot Pound	1.3265	1.3825

Per 100

Dubai says '94 aluminium output sold

DUBAI (R) — The Gulf emirate of Dubai said it had sold all of its planned aluminium production for 1994 which would make it difficult to follow other aluminium producers who are trying to salvage weak prices by cutting output.

Mike Roberts, Dubai Aluminium Co. Ltd (Dubal) acting chief executive officer, said they have not reached a decision on cuts and would watch closely results of a meeting of world aluminium producers on Feb. 28 in Montreal.

"We are already sold out for the whole year," he said in an interview with Reuters.

"It would be very difficult for us (to cut) because we would have to go to people and say 'we are not going to be able to supply you'... that would not be very popular," he said.

Dubal produces about 244,000 tonnes a year of primary metal. About 37 per cent of output is exported to Japan. Dubal also exports to Taiwan, China, Belgium, Germany and other countries.

"We're just under a quarter of a million tonnes (output per year) so we're not one of the big guys," he said. "We are both watching the situation and we are also studying the subject."

The French group Pechiney S.A., one of the world's largest aluminium producers with one million tonnes output a year, announced Thursday a plan to cut output by 12 per cent as part of an international agreement to support weak aluminium prices.

Mr. Roberts said Dubal was still hit by low aluminium prices at the end of 1993 despite low labour costs relative to Western producers and cheap indigenous fuel supplies to run the plant.

Dubal sells aluminium at a premium plus the London Metals Exchange price, at $1,316 per tonne on Thursday.

Mr. Roberts said demand in the UAE was growing and may require an extra four to six tonnes per year in 1995. This would mean they might have to cut back on exports, he said.

He said there was room for expanding capacity to 320,000 tonnes in the long term but there were currently no firm plans.

Dubal, owned by the government of Dubai, one of seven emirates in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Alba in the Gulf state of Bahrain are the only two aluminium smelters in the Gulf.

Mr. Roberts said Alba supplied Dubal with 2,000 tonnes of aluminium last year after an explosion at Dubal caused a loss in production.

Mr. Roberts said the Dubai government was carrying out a pre-feasibility study for a plant to refine bauxite, which yields alumina, the product used to make aluminium.

Official corruption doubled, China says

BEIJING (R) — China Saturday gave details on the explosive growth of government corruption during its two-year economic boom, saying tens of thousands of officials nationwide are using political power for personal gain.

A report by the Communist Party's Discipline Inspection Committee said close to 60,000 officials were punished either by party or civilian authorities for corruption during the last quarter of 1993.

The overall caseload for corruption involving amounts of at least 10,000 yuan ($1,150) during the period doubled that of the same period in 1992, according to the report published in official newspapers.

More worrying, the biggest increase in corruption was seen in officials of relatively high rank.

Cases of economic crime among "leading cadres" at or above the country level increased 6.8 times over the same 1992 period, while those among officials at or above the level of bureau director jumped 11 times, the report said.

The Discipline Inspection Committee began a week-long meeting Friday vowing to step up its work to root out rotten officials, a tacit admission that previous anti-corruption drives had failed to resolve the problem.

Corruption and the perception of dirty dealing by China's political elite is one of the main fears of Beijing's communist rulers and were one of the chief spurs to the failed Tiananmen pro-democracy protests of 1989.

The party's ethics watchdog group set out guidelines for clean government, banning officials from using their powers to obtain cheap cars or housing and instructing them to maintain a simple and frugal lifestyle.

China's official media frequently publicises the cases of relatively junior officials charged with corruption, some of whom are sentenced to death.

The anti-corruption sweep has so far left the top level of leadership unscathed.

G-7 ministers see end of recession

KRONBERG, Germany (AFP) — Finance ministers of the seven leading industrial states concluded Saturday that the recession was over with economic upturn in most of their countries, the senior Italian participant in the talks said.

In a review of the world economic situation, the Group of Seven (G-7) ministers saw "grounds for optimism," with perhaps only Germany still showing a recessionary tendency and the U.S. economy as "locomotive," Treasury Secretary Piero Barucci said.

Germany called the meeting of finance ministers primarily to review the free-market reforms in Russia, in which it has a leading financial stake.

But before examining the Russian delegation on Moscow's plans to rein in inflation and curb its budget deficit as the price for more aid, the seven took a general look at the world situation.

The International Monetary Fund, represented in Kronberg by its Managing Director Michel Camdessus, was "sceptical" about the German government's growth target of 1-1.5 per cent this year, a German finance ministry spokesman confided.

Mr. Barucci said the meeting also took note of the trade tension between the United States and Japan which dominated the start of the day's talks in the cosseted small mountain town of Kronberg, near Frankfurt.

The United States is pressing Japan to open up its markets and reduce its trade deficit, which has destabilised the yen-mark rate.

Japan told the meeting it was trying to its cut trade surplus, Mr. Barucci said.

Russian Economics Minister Alexander Shokin said that "from a political and economical point of view," Russia had "met nor all but most" conditions to allow it to join the Group of Seven and make it the Group of Eight leading industrial nations.

The seven are Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States.

Mr. Shokin told journalists the Russian delegation was in Kronberg to explain the latest political and economic changes in Russia.

A rise in power of conservative and nationalist forces in December's elections has seen reformers quit the government and a hiatus in reforms.

AFM trading slips, but trend steady

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Trading at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) slipped but remained steady on Saturday, one day after a massacre of over 60 Palestinians at a mosque in the West Bank town of Hebron cast a shadow over prospects for peace in the region.

Shares worth JD 2.3 million changed hands during the day, much lower than the daily average of JD 3.6 million registered during the week ending Thursday.

"The decline is there of course, but it is not of a level that should be seen as a sign of alarm," said a broker. "The trend in the market is steady and there is no sign of panic withdrawals of capital."

"Judging from the usual trends during (the holy month of) Ramadan, the indicators are quite healthy," said the broker, noting that many investors opt to stay away from the market during this period because of religious convictions that they should not indulge in ventures that deal with usury, which is banned in Islam.

However, speculators are expected to converge on the market during the last days of Ramadan for fresh acquisitions which could be held over the long Eid Al Fitr weekend for profit-taking, the broker said.

In the meantime, there could be repercussions in the market if "the violent wave in the occupied territories continues, but until such time it is safe to expect a steady level of trading," said the broker, who spoke on condition of anonymity in line with standing AFM regulations.

The volume of trading in the market for the past week was JD 16.6 million, 47 per cent up from the JD 11.3 million registered in the previous week.

A total of 4.9 million shares changed hands during the week under 6,442 contracts, figures released by the AFM showed.

Industrial stock accounted for 43.4 per cent of the volume with a turnover of JD 7.2 million, followed by the banking sector with 39.2 per cent (JD 6.5 million), the services sector with 15.6 per cent (JD 2.6 million) and the insurances sector with 1.8 per cent (JD 300,000).

Shares of 80 companies were covered during the week's trading, with 40 of them gaining in value, 28 reflecting a decline and 12 remaining steady.

The nature of trading and focus on investors showed a shift from the previous week when the banking sector accounted for the lion's share of stocks that changed hands.

Brokers said meanwhile that foreign companies allowed to trade in Jordanian stocks were slowly "feeling their way around."

Although the government approval, issued in February and January, covers 15 companies and up to $100 million in foreign capital, only a few million have actually entered the market, the brokers noted.

In general, foreign investors were described as more thorough than local speculators.

"They will go through a close scrutiny of companies, in terms of balance sheet, profitability, assets, management and performance over the years before committing funds," said the broker, adding that such an approach compares with local investors who often tend to react to short-term developments.

However, the very fact that foreign investors are taking an active interest in entering the AFM evidences the vibrancy of the local bourse.

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U.S., N. Korea reach agreement

UNITED NATIONS (R) — North Korea has agreed to open some nuclear facilities to immediate international inspections in exchange for U.S. moves to end the Communist country's isolation once the examiners begin work next week.

In another example of brinkmanship that has characterised the year-long controversy, Pyongyang's officials agreed late Friday to issue visas immediately to inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) so they could travel this weekend and begin work by March 1.

The United States and North Korea are expected to hold a third round of high-level talks in Geneva on March 21 if the inspections are completed.

In addition, Washington is expected to announce a suspension of military exercises with South Korea for 1994. The two Koreas are also to start their own dialogue.

"We have reached an agreement that will enable the IAEA inspections to begin in Pyongyang on March 1. We welcome that agreement," announced Thomas Huhhard, a U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state.

"This is only a first step toward the resolution of the nuclear issue hut we are pleased that these needed inspections... will in fact begin," he added.

After months of resistance, North Korea last week agreed to allow inspections at seven sites but then did not issue visas to the IAEA examiners. The IAEA had threatened to turn over the issue to the U.N. Security Council next week, which has the power to impose trade sanctions.

But Pyongyang has not yet agreed to access for two suspect sites that experts say are crucial to full knowledge of North Korea's nuclear capabilities.

Mr. Hubhard had conducted mid-level negotiations in a United Nations basement room throughout the week with Ho Jung, North Korea's deputy U.N. permanent representative.

He said that Washington would announce the remainder of the agreement on March 1 — after the inspectors had arrived in Pyongyang and had begun their work.

But Mr. Ho stole his thunder and filled in the remaining details, which he said were four simultaneous steps to be taken on March 1:

— The United States announces its intention to suspend its "Team Spirit" military exercises with South Korea in 1994.

— Inspections by the IAEA begin and will be completed within the period agreed on earlier by both sides.

— Working level contacts resume between North and South Korea on the exchange of special envoys. No date was given.

— The United States and North Korea announce that a third round of high-level talks will begin on March 21 in Geneva.

North Korea, which denies U.S. suspicions it is trying to develop nuclear weapons, hopes a high-level dialogue with the United States — suspended since last summer — will lead to diplomatic and economic benefits.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher earlier in the week said that North Korea understands that diplomatic talks with the United States will not begin until the inspections have been completed. But he did not rule out setting a schedule for them in advance.

Meanwhile, United Nations nuclear experts were ready and waiting to fly to North Korea following its decision to open suspect nuclear sites to inspection, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said Saturday.

"All they're waiting for is the stamps in their passports," IAEA spokesman David Kyd told Reuters.

Mr. Kyd said the IAEA inspection team of six experts could leave agency headquarters in Vienna for North Korea Sunday, flying by way of Beijing, just as soon as North Korea's representatives here gave a sign that visas were being readied.

There was a possihle connection from Beijing to Pyongyang Monday or Tuesday, he said.

Mr. Kyd said details of the newly agreed arrangements were still awaited in Vienna: "The North Korean representatives here have no instructions so far. We are all waiting here for word," he said.

In a separate development, talks between South and North Korea are expected to reopen as early as the coming week under a package deal that binds Pyongyang to accept international nuclear inspections, Seoul officials said Saturday.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry welcomed the North Korean agreement to accept inspections and expressed hopes that the decision would lead to a complete resolution of the yearlong nuclear dispute.

IAEA inspectors get visas

VIENNA (AFP) — Inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Saturday received visas to visit North Korea to inspect seven nuclear sites, the agency said in a statement.

A seven-member IAEA inspector team would leave Vienna Sunday, and arrive in Pyongyang Tuesday, following North Korea's acceptance that inspections could go ahead from March 1, the statement added.

Bosnian women query the price of items in Sarajevo's Markale Market which is again in operation 15 days after the mortar attack which caused many casualties (AFP photo)

Fragile truce holds between Bosnian Muslims, Croats ahead of U.S. talks

VITEZ, Bosnia (R) — A fragile ceasefire between Muslim and Croat rivals in central Bosnia entered its second day Saturday as their leaders gathered in Washington for talks on a possible confederation.

Shooting from both sides went on after the Friday deadline for the truce, although U.N. officials said Saturday the ceasefire generally seemed to be holding.

The U.N. commander in Bosnia said the truce, and the whole progress towards peace in the country, could be crippled if the West failed to send extra troops to back it up.

The general told Reuters he needed another 3,000 to 5,000 troops as quickly as possible, warning that the fragile ceasefire in central Bosnia could collapse without them.

"I am a realist and all I can do is the best I can with what I have got but we are living on borrowed time." Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose said.

The ceasefire agreed Wednesday is an attempt hy the U.N. to build on a successful truce in the Bosnian capital Sarajevo.

But the central Bosnian plan is much broader, calling for the massive interposition of U.N. troops between opposing forces along a 350 kilometre long confrontation line.

Western defence analysts say countries fear being sucked into an intractable Balkan conflict with no escape route if they commit troops to the region as peacekeepers.

The United States has said it would only send troops once an overall peace settlement had been signed. Those countries with troops already in Bosnia have become wary of providing more.

Under the ceasefire, the two sides are supposed to withdraw their heavy weapons from the front lines or turn them over to UNPROFOR by March 7.

"The ceasefire seems to be holding. The few violations so far can be excused by bad communication," Brigadier John Reith, a senior British commander in Bosnia, said Saturday.

In Vitez, the central town of the contested Lasva Valley where the Muslims have 65,000 Croats surrounded, the U.N. reported 24 violations — mostly small arms fire — in the two hours after the Friday noon (1100 GMT) deadline.

The most serious violation occurred two hours after the truce went into effect when a nordic U.N. convoy came under fire, apparently from the Croat-held cemetery in Gornji Vakuf, U.N. sources said.

The truce, which was agreed Wednesday, is intended to pave the way for the possible formation a unified bi-national Bosnian state to end the ruinous Muslim-Croat war over territory in industrially-developed central Bosnia.

Muslim and Croats, allies against Serbs when Bosnia's civil war began almost two years ago, have been fighting each other for territory in the region since last spring.

The United States is pressing them to heal their rift and has called both sides to talks in Washington at the weekend to discuss uniting and forming a confederation with the neighbouring Republic of Croatia.

The plan would effectively bring about Bosnia's carve up between Croatia and Serbia which diplomats have always suspected was their goal since the conflict began.

But it would potentially offer Muslims a better future than the tiny ethnic mini-state offered to them under a U.N.-sponsored plan to divide Bosnia in three mini-states.

Sarajevo continued to be calm after the NATO air strikes threat forced the Serbs to withdraw their siege guns.

Inkatha, government talks adjourn without progress

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Talks aimed at persuading Zulu leaders to take part in all-race ballots adjourned here Saturday with no sign of progress, but were to continue later, the South African Press Association (SAPA) reported.

The talks were being held between Zulu Chief Mangosuthu Butbelezi, Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini and the South African government to discuss the two leaders' threatened boycott of the April elections.

Amos Ngema, a spokesman for Mr. Bnthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), said the talks had ended at midday and would continue Saturday night without the two leaders and the government team's chief representative, Home Affairs Minister Danie Schutte.

There was no comment on how the talks, to try and persuade Mr. Buthelezi and King Goodwill to contest the country's first all-race election on April 24-28, were proceeding.

King Goodwill who has come to the brink of announcing the secession of Kwazulu black homeland and surrounding Natal province, said at the start of the meeting that the South African government's offers on the future of the Zulu kingdom were "fatally flawed."

The government made the offers Thursday night after a meeting in Cape town with a team representing the king to discuss his demands for sovereignty.

Details were not released, but Mr. Buthelezi said the proposal represented a "basis" for Saturday's resumption of talks.

Talks between the government, African National Congress (ANC) and the conservative Freedom Alliance, which includes the IFP, broke down earlier this montb.

Government spokesman Niel Du Bois said if an agreement was reached with the king and the IFP, the new proposal would have to he approved by the multi-party negotiating council before being submitted to parliament for inclusion in the interim constitution to come into effect after the election.

But King Goodwill said before Saturday's meeting that the proposal was "fundamentally flawed because by its very nature, my demand cannot be met by any amount of amendments to that constitution."

"That constitution is completely irrelevant to the question of the recognition of the right to sovereignty of the Kingdom of Kwazulu," he said.

In further efforts to kick-start stalled negotiations, ANC President Nelson Mandela managed to persuade Mr. Buthelezi, his bitter political rival, to meet him next Tuesday.

That meeting will take place as the parliament sits in Cape Town to legislate last minute changes to the constitution that were offered by the ANC and the government to Mr. Buthelezi and his black and white conservative allies in the Alliance.

French MP shot in 'contract killing'

TOULON, France (R) — Hired killers most likely shot dead a woman parliamentarian who spearheaded a campaign against mafia drug traffickers in southern France, investigators said Saturday.

Yann Piat, of the centrist UDF party, junior partner in tbe 11 month-old ruling coalition, was murdered Friday evening on ber way home in the town of Hyeres, east of Toulon.

A gunman riding pillion on a motorcycle drew level with her car and first shot her driver, wounding him in the leg, and then fired two hullets at Ms. Piat, who died instantly, police said.

Investigators said the murder of the 44-year-old Piat, who in recent months had taken an outspoken stand against drug addiction and traffickers in her region, was the work of paid professionals.

"The circumstances of the murder make us think very strongly of a contract killing," Andre Ride, public prosecutor in Toulon, told reporters.

Police bave reported mafia-style gangs are active in the area, trafficking in drugs as well as laundering their money through local casinos and nightclubs.

Piat, a mother of two, had planned to stand for mayor of Hyeres, on a platform including anti-drug measures.

She first entered parliament in March 1986 as a member of the extreme-right National Front but later fell out with the party and was expelled in October 1988. She was a god-daughter of its leader Jean-Marie Le Pen.

She heavily criticised Mr. Le Pen after he made a play on words over the deaths of Jews in concentration camps during World War II.

A relative of Ms. Piat, who would not be named, said she had "very tense relations" with local supporters of the National Front. But he refused to link her murder to her stand against the party.

"I feel concerned on a personal level even though we have been in political disagreement for several years," Mr. Le Pen said Saturday.

"I had not seen her since she left our movement, but our personal links make me feel her brutal and scandalous disappearance as a personal emotion," he added.

French newspapers reported Ms. Piat had received anonymous threats during her last electoral campaign in March.

"She recently told me that her region had become a dangerous area for those who fought against the mafia," television interviewer Henri De Virieux, who hosts a weekly programme on politics, told Europe 1 Radio.

"When we were preparing to receive her on the programme, she said: 'If you come to Toulon, be careful'," he said.

Campaign for Italian elections kicks off

ROME (AFP) — Campaigning has begun for Italy's general elections next month aimed at overhauling the political landscape, with voters facing a new form of voting likely to usher in a fractious parliament.

The campaign, which officially opened Friday, comes after a month of fierce bargaining which produced three widely divergent groups — the Progressive Alliance, the right-wing coalition, and the centrist Christian-Democratic Alliance.

President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro called the elections, saying the outgoing parliament had been discredited by corruption probes which tarnished almost one-third of the 956 deputies.

He considered Italians made a clear call for renewal of their country's system and politicians, in a referendum on political reform last April.

After the referendum, outgoing deputies adopted a new electoral system which will end the political careers of most of them. Some deputies, facing corruption charges, may end up in prison.

Under new legislation, three quarters of Italy's deputies and senators will be elected in a single round of simple majority voting while the remaining quarter will be elected by the proportional system.

Complicated new rules however meant that many of the 5,000 candidates — most of them political neophytes — had trouble coping with red tape. As a result, many lists contained candidates who had been turned down because of registration irregularities, particularly members of pact for Italy, which heads the centrist alliance with a strong Christian Democrat flavour.

About 20 parties have registered for the March 27 and 28 elections, while latest public opinion polls show some 60 per cent of the voters remain undecided.

The days leading up the campaign saw dramatic developments which upset the balance of political power thus far and threw into doubt expectations that tbe Progressive Alliance, which won partial local elections in December, would capture the March vote.

Press baron Silvio Berlusconi, who owns the leading European private television group, jumped into the fray, forming the anti-Communist rightwing movement Forza Italy (Go Italy).

Mr. Berlusconi had challenged the right-wing to unite to prevent a "Communist" government from taking power. When the challenge was not taken up, he created Forza Italia (Go Italy), a party based on liberal right-wing principles reminiscent of former U.S. President Ronald Reagan.

Forza Italia snowhalled as support clubs were formed across the country and slick television commercials portrayed the dream of an idyllic Italy, victorious and confident.

Mr. Berlusconi went on to conclude a political alliance with the Northern League, a federalist movement influential in the north of the country, and an electoral agreement calling for his movement to field joint candidates with the neo-fascist National Alliance which was rising steadily in the south on the ruins of the Christian-Democrats.

As for the centrists, Mario Segni, creator of the 1991-1993 campaign for electoral reform and head of Pact For Italy, teamed up with former Christian-Democrats with tbe renamed Italian Popular Party (PPI) which, however, has ruled out fielding any candidates tarnished hy having belonged to the old regime.

On the left, the Progressive Alliance groups seven movements around the former Communist Party, now reformed and renamed Democratic Party of the Left. While popular despite corruption probes involving several of its leaders, the allianee has faced criticism because it includes Marxists who still favour a state-regulated economy.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Zhirinovsky has not lost his seat — aide

MOSCOW (R) — An aide to Russian ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky said Saturday his seat in parliament was not in danger despite a court ruling that his election last December was invalid. A Russian district court ruled Friday that election procedure had been violated in the constituency from which Mr. Zhirinovsky was elected to parliament and said the Dec. 12 poll was invalid. But officials at Mr. Zhirinovsky's far-right Liberal Democratic Party headquarters begged to differ. "His mandate is not threatened in any way," a spokesman told Reuters. "I won't go into details, but in practice the decision is of no importance. Forget the court ruling." The move by the Shchelkovo District Court, reported by Interfax News Agency, can be appealed against within 10 days. The ruling came after one of the five losing contenders for the constituency, Professor Oleg Novikov, filed a formal complaint that election regulations had been violated. He alleged that candidates had not enjoyed equal access to television, as provided by the rules, and that the ballot paper contained the name of a contender who had pulled out of the election race.

Sinn Fein starts key annual meeting

TALLAGHT, Ireland (R) — A top official of Sinn Fein, political wing of the IRA, accused Britain Saturday of double standards in its quest for peace in Northern Ireland. National Chairman Tom Hartley asked why British Prime Minister John Major stubbornly refused to discuss an Anglo-Irish peace plan with Sinn Fein despite having had secret contacts with the party over three years. In a keynote address to Sinn Fein's two-day annual conference Mr. Hartley called on the British government to drop its objections to direct talks with the party to clarify the Dec. 15 plan. He said Mr. Major failed to clarify key issues in a Friday article in a Belfast-based newspaper in which the British premier urged Sinn Fein to endorse the Anglo-Irish joint declaration to end 25 years of Northern Ireland conflict. "He claims the declaration is clear. I am saying it is not. He says there are no problems with the text. I am saying and so are many other people that there is a problem with the text, hence the need for clarification," Mr. Hartley said.

U.S. launches largest MIA search

HANOI (AFP) — U.S. military teams flew into Vietnam Saturday for the largest search yet for the remains of service personnel still classified as Missing In Action (MIA) from the Vietnam War. Eight teams of experts will be excavating crash sites or places where U.S. personnel are believed to have been buried in the northernmost provinces and in the south of the country. The search, the 28th joint mission by the United States and Vietnam, is the first since the lifting of the U.S. trade embargo by President Bill Clinton on Feb. 4. Lieutenant Colonel John Cray, the head of the U.S. effort here, tried to dispel fears among some U.S. veterans' groups that Hanoi might ease up on its assistance in the MIA search after the lifting of the trade embargo. He said Vietnamese authorities had "never gone into such detail before" in their preparation for the latest mission. "Their office worked through weekends to prepare for the 28th joint mission," Col. Cray said, adding that Vietnamese officials had agreed to all the U.S. requests ahead of the searches. "For our counterparts on the Vietnamese side, the lifting of the embargo has encouraged them as they have seen their efforts recognised," he said.

Li Peng: No wavering on Hong Kong

BEIJING (R) — Premier Li Peng vowed that China would stick to its guns in its row with Britain over the political future of Hong Kong and warned London not to underestimate Chinese resolve. "Under no circumstances will the Chinese government waver in its determination to recover China's sovereignty over Hong Kong," Mr. Li was quoted as saying by the official Xinhua News Agency Saturday. "China is not what it was 150 years ago. It now enjoys political stability and an ever-growing economy. We are full of confidence in the future of our motherland," Mr. Li said. "I am sure that Hong Kong will achieve smooth transition and long-term prosperity and stability," Mr. Li said. China Thursday flatly declared that the door was completely closed to any further negotiations with London over Governor Chris Patten's plan for political reforms in Hong Kong before it reverts to Chinese control in 1997. Zhang Junsheng, vice director of China's Xinhua News Agency in Hong Kong, was quoted Saturday lashing out at Britain for releasing contents of Sino-British talks on Hong Kong and warning China would retaliate. Britain released its version of the 17 rounds of fruitless talks with China Thursday.

Fiji's Rabuka claims poll victory

SUVA, Fiji (R) — Fijian Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka claimed victory Saturday in Fiji's general election and said his new government may include Indian politicians ousted by him in a military coup in 1987. "Any victory is good," Mr. Rahuka said at a victory press conference in a large open shed behind his home in the capital Suva where he had gathered party faithful to drink Fiji's traditional intoxicant kava from coconut shells. Rahuka said his ruling Soqosoqo Ni Vakevulewa Ni Taukei (SVT), or Fijian Political Party, won 31 seats and with the support of the mixed-race General Voters Party (GVP) and two independents would again form a government almost identical to his previous one. The SVT held 30 seats in the old parliament. "It's just satisfying to know that the people still have confidence in the party," Mr. Rahuka said. "I am very happy." Mr. Rahuka said he expected President Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara to appoint him prime minister in the next two days. Under Fiji's 1990 racially-biased constitution indigenous Fijians are guaranteed a majority of 37 seats in the one house 70-seat parliament, hut the president must appoint an indigenous Fijian prime minister with the majority support of parliament. Mr. Rahuka said the snap election, called after SVT rebels blocked his 1994 budget, had interrupted his efforts to create national unity with the country's ethnic Indians.

S. African mine disaster toll falls to 12

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Rescue workers reduced the number of casualties from a mudslide after a gold mine dam burst, saying Saturday that 13 people had been killed and 34 were still missing. Police spokeswoman Marie Louw said the previous death toll of 13 was wrong because one body had been counted twice. The number of missing had shrunk by one after seven more people had reported in. She said rescue workers digging throughout the waste which engulfed hundreds of homes in the Orange Free State town of Virginia hoped more of those listed missing had sought refuge with relatives and friends and would eventually come forward. A two-metre (six-foot) high wave of waste, laced with cyanide used to extract gold from ore, roared through the area below the 20-year-old dam which gave way during a rainstorm Tuesday.

Vatican: Three Anglican bishops ask to convert

VATICAN CITY (R) — The Vatican has so far received requests from three Anglican bishops and 150 to 200 priests who want to convert because of a Church of England decision to ordain women, a senior cardinal said Friday. "Up until now we have news of 150-200 priests and three bishops, a number much smaller than that which has been reported in the English press," Cardinal Edward Cassidy told the Rome newspaper Il Tempo in an interview to be published Saturday. Card. Cassidy, head of the Vatican's department in charge of Christian unity, said that if the higher numbers were accurate Rome would accept the priests and bishops cordially. On Wednesday, one group of Anglican protestors, Forward In Faith, said that more than 700 clergymen and seven bishops had decided to convert to Catholicism because of the decision to ordain women priests. Anglican primate George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, said he was saddened by the exodus of priests. "Everyone has to follow his own spiritual path and this sometimes means going from one communion to another," he told the Italian Catholic magazine Il Regno. The Anglican Church, which has 10,500 ordained clergy, removed the final barrier to the ordination of women Tuesday, clearing the way for the first women to enter the priesthood in March.

Arson becomes top cause of fires in Japan

TOKYO (R) — Arson became the top cause of fires in Japan last year for the first time since records began in 1971, an official report was quoted as saying Saturday. Newspaper quoted the Fire Defence Agency as saying 6,509 fires were confirmed as Arson in 1993, up 13.7 per cent from a year earlier, becoming the top cause of fires for the first time since the agency began recording causes in 1971. Arson accounted for 35 per cent of all fires in Tokyo and 12 other big cities last year, the agency was quoted as saying. The report said the second-largest cause of fires was cigarettes at 6,151, and the third was cooking stoves, at 5,731. A total of 1,838 people were killed by fires in 1993, down 44 from a year earlier.

Disney dumps Jackson film

ORLANDO, Florida (AFP) — Disney's Epcot Centre is dumping Michael Jackson's Captain Eo film, but said the decision had nothing to do with allegations he sexually molested a teenager. "We have to keep offering something new," said David Herbst, a Disney spokesman. "We may bave gotten some complaints. But that's not why we're replacing the film." The pop star settled a civil lawsuit for sexual molestation for $15 million, a U.S. news agency reported. The 3-d Jackson extravaganza will be replaced hy "honey, I shrunk the audience."

Bee Gees cancel French concerts

PARIS (AFP) — The British rock group Bee Gees has cancelled three concerts they were to give in France in April because lead singer Barry Gibb is sick, their record company said. Barry, Rohin and Maurice Gihb, who until recently were tops on French pop charts with their hit song Paying The Prince Of Love, were to perform in the Mediterranean port of Toulon on April 9, in Paris on April 11 and in southwestern Toulouse six days later.

Airlines to offer inflight massages

TOKYO (AFP) — Starting April 1, those who sit in Japan Airlines Co. Ltd.'s first-class seats on some flights may be pressed, pounded and rubbed — from their necks down to their lower backs. The airlines' new "sky massage" chairs, the first ever inflight automatic massage seats, will employ three massage styles — pressing, pounding and rolling from the neck to the lower back, the carrier said. Users will be able to programme their own customised massages, Japan Airlines said. The seats will be installed in the first class cabins of four 747-400 aircraft flying from Tokyo to New York and London, the company said, adding that it was planning to introduce the seats on other routes.

Jordan soccer league championship full of surprises in its 15th week

By Aleen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Although two scheduled matches were postponed because of prevailing weather conditions, the 15th week of soccer's first division championship seemed to be full of surprises.

The week's most stunning result was lowly Al Baqaa's 4-2 win over 4th placed Al *Ramtha. Al Qadissieh also sur*prised and delighted their fans when they upset 3rd placed Al Hussein 3-1.

. League leaders Al Faisali remained in first place and will meet Al Ahli Monday in one of the postponed matches, hoping to continue their remarkable unbeaten streak and widen their lead to 13 points.

Al Wihdat could considerably advanee their standing when they play Sahab in the second postponed match Sunday.

Al Qadissieh's victory over Al Hussein went to prove that Al Qadissieh were making an unmistakable convincing comeback in the second leg of the tournament. They have so far defeated Al Yarmouk 6-2, Al Ahli 3-1 and drew with Sahab 1-1. Their victories were much aided by the brilliance of key striker Mustafa Adam who has the league's best scoring record with 12 goals so far.

Ismail Awadat opened scoring for Al Qadissieh in the 15th minute, and Dayan Saleh stunned Al Hussein with goal only two minutes later.

Al Husseio repeatedly tried to score and succeeded in the 56th minute. They later lost an opportunity to equalise when they missed scoring from a penalty shot in 65th minute.

Though Al Qadissieh's Adam did not score, he assisted teammate Munir Hantash in sealing their team's 3-1 precious victory.

Newcomers Al Fuheis were another surprise team when they scored an important 2-1 win over Al Jazireh to move from last to 10th place in the 12 team standings.

Al Jazireh lost some easy scoring chances at the beginning, but Al Fuheis were the first to score by Khader Mubarak in the 26th minute.

Al Jazireh tried hard to equalise and a goal was ruled offside by the linesman, but Amjad Diyabat netted in the equaliser in the 75th minute.

However, Al Fuheis managed to score their second goal from a header by Wa'ed Suweis in 82nd minute.

In another match, Al Arabi moved up one place to 7th after their 1-0 win over Al Yarmouk who thus dropped to last place and are in the danger zone, as the last fuur teams will be relegated.

Both teams lost some good scoring chances that might have given the match a different flavour.

Al Yarmouk missed the efforts of Khaled Yousef when he got a red card hooking in the second half.

Al Arabi sealed the match when Ahmad Subh scored from a penalty kick in the 86th minute.

Yet the weeks' most stunning result remains Al Baqaa's 4-2 win over Al Ramtha.

Al Baqaa's Khaled Faleh opened scoring in the 10th minute, but Salim Diyabat soon equalised ten minutes later.

Faleh was instrumental in assisting teammate Riyad Diqes in scoring Al Baqaa's second goal in the 26th minute, ending the first half 2-1 for Al Baqaa.

A header from Khaled Aqqouri in the 69th minute gave Al Ramtha a 2-2 draw, but that seemed to give the Baqaa an incentive to strengthen their offence hoping to score again.

The two strikes, Faleh and Diqes scored not one, but two goals in the 80th and 90th minutes giving their fans much to be happy about in Al Baqaa's first ever in over Al Ramtha in league history.

In the upcoming week, Al Ramtha meet Al Yarmouk, Al Faisali clash with Al Hussein, Al Arabi meet Sahab, Al Ahli play Al Jazireh, Al Fuheis meet Al Baqaa, and Al Qadissieh clash with Al Wihdat.

Standings after 15th week

Team	P	W	D	GP	L	GF	GA	PTs
*Faisali	14	12	1	1	-	36	8	39
*Ahli	14	7	4	-	3	22	13	29
Hussein	15	6	4	2	3	22	13	28
Ramtha	15	7	2	1	5	25	18	26
*Wihadat	14	6	3	2	3	13	10	26
Qadissieh	15	5	4	2	4	22	17	25
Arabi	15	4	4	-	7	18	29	20
Baqaa	15	5	2	1	7	14	25	20
Jazireh	15	2	6	-	7	17	21	16
Fuheis	15	4	1	1	9	10	25	15
*Sahab	14	2	3	2	7	13	20	14
Yarmouk	15	4	-	2	9	13	26	14

*These teams have postponed matches

Vreni gets first Alpine Gold for Swiss, Germany takes biathlon gold medal

LILLEHAMMER, Norway (AP) — Vreni Schneider recaptured some of the glory of Calgary in the last women's Alpine race of the Lillehammer Games Saturday. After a six-year gold medal drought in their national sport, the trilingual Swiss could say: "Endlich" "enfin" "finalmente."

"Finally," in German, Freneh and Italian.

By winning the special slalom, Schneider gave Switzerland its first Alpine gold medal since the 1988 Calgary Games and earned her fifth career Olympic medal. She also became the first woman in Olympic history to win three Olympic Alpine gold medals.

Germany shot perfectly on the rifle range and never lost its early cross-country lead to defend its Olympic title in the men's 30-kilometre biathlon relay. Russia won silver and France bronze.

The biathlon silver enabled Russia to hold on second place in the Lillehammer medals race with 23 overall. Germany, now with 22, strengthened its hold on third place.

With one day of competition left here, host Norway had a virtual unbeatable lead in the national standings, with 25 total medals.

Norway's strong Alpine team, which swept the men's combined Friday, is favourites in the wrapup men's slalom on closing day.

The Russian ice hockey team, successor to a dynasty that had won eight of the last 10 olympic golds, was playing for just a bronze medal Saturday night, after losing 4-3 in its semifinal Friday against Sweden. The Swedes will play Sunday for the gold against Canada, a 5-3 winner over previously unbeaten and united Finland.

Also on Saturday programme were three short-track speedskating races — the men's 500 metres and 5,000-metre relay and the women's 1,000.

On the ski slopes north of Lillehammer, Schneider — fifth after the first slalom run — had to go all out on her second run to beat archrival Pernilla Wiberg of Sweden. Elfriede Eder of Austria and 18-year-old first-round leader Katja Koren of Slovenia

Schneider slashed her way through the 68 gates of the second run in 56.33 seconds, the fastest time of the day. That gave her a two-run total of 1 minute, 56.01 seconds, .34 faster than Eder's 1:56.35 run for silver.

Koen won bronze, giving Slovenia its second Olympic medal since declaring independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. Alenka Dovzan won the country's fist medal, another bronze, in the women's Alpine combined Monday.

Wiberg, who also was seeking a third career gold, was faster than Schneider on the top of the course, but then lost her edge, finishing fourth.

The 29-year-old Schneider already had won a silver and bronze earlier in these games. At Calgary in 1988, she won two golds. But at the Albertville Games two ago, she fell in the giant slalom and finished out of medal contention in the slalom.

For Schneider, Saturday's race recalled the Feb. 5 pre-Olympic slalom of the World Cup season at Sierra Nevada, Spain, where she also game from behind to win.

"I thought of that and realised I could do the same thing here, so I attacked," Schneider said.

On the Birkebeineren biathlon course, the German quartet of Ricco Gross, Frank Luck, Mark Kirchner and Sven Fischer clocked 1 hour, 30 minutes, 22.1 seconds over 30 kilometres. They edged the Russians by 61.5 seconds. France was third, 2:09.2 minutes behind.

Three of the Germans — Gross, Kirchner and Fischer — raced on the team that won the gold at 1992 Albertville.

"The Margin was safe," said Kirchner, who won two gold and one silver in the 1992 games. "It makes you calm at the range. I was calm, I could shoot calmly and I could ski calmly."

German's Harald Czudaj, sixth at Albertville, positioned himself for a medal in Sunday's four-man bobsled final. He had Saturday's fastest run, zipping down the 16-turn Hunderfossen course in 51.67 seconds in the first heat. His second run of 51.88 gave him an aggregate time of 1:43.55, 12-hundredths of a second faster than Switzerland Gustav Weder.

"Both runs were not bad, although I'm happier with my performance in the first run," Said Czudaj, who has admitted spying on his teammates for the stasi secret police when he raced for east Germany. "We just have to persevere, stay loose."

Weder, dubbed "Professor Bobsled" back home, remained the gold-medal favourite, though. Weder, 32, was superior in practice almost every day.

Solari to coach Saudi team

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Saudi Arabia's national soccer team will compete in the World Cup under the guidance of an Argentine coach, Jorge Solari, the government announced.

"Indio" (the Indian) Solari, as he is known to Argentine fans, was responsible for the transfer last year of star Diego Maradona to league team Newell's Old Boys. Both resigned in December after poor results sent Newell's to the bottom of the standings.

Late Friday, the media secretariat issued a statement saying, "By requesting of Saudi King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz Bin Al Saud to (Argentine) President Carlos Menem, he (Menem) proposed Solari, who is already organising his coaching team."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bad weather hits British soccer programme

LONDON (AFP) — Heavy rain and snow hit Saturday's British soccer programme, adding a host of postponements to the two games called off Friday. A waterlogged St. James' Park pitch saw the Newcastle-Ipswich match become the second English premiership game to fall victim to the weather, following the Sheffield United-Queens Park Rangers fixture, postponed Friday. Torrential rain also forced the postponement of three matches in each of the three other English divisions. Scotland was worse affected. Heavy snow left only two games in the premier division.

Chinese apologise for ceremony storm

LILLEHAMMER (AFP) — Zhang Yanmei, the Chinese short-track speed skater, is to apologise for storming away from the medals ceremony after the controversial 500m final. "The athlete and the Chinese Olympic Committee are apologising and we're happy with that," IOC press chief Andrew Napier said. Yanmei, who finished second, had claimed Cathy Turner obstructed her when the American swept past her on the final end to snatch the gold.

Samaranch popularity soars

LILLEHAMMER (AFP) — IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch is three times as popular in Norway as he was at the beginning of the games — but he still wouldn't be advised to run for public office here. Despite his high-profile flight to Sarajevo and a personal invitation for King Harald to present the medals in Sunday's 500m cross country, Samaranch is held in esteem by only 22 per cent of Norwegians, according to a poll carried out as the games come to a close. That, however, is a massive improvement on the six per cent who said they had a high opinion of him at the start of the games.

Nosy neighbours stop gambling

LILLEHAMMER (AFP) — An illegal casino set up in a rented house in Lillehammer for the Olympics has been closed down by police after a tip-off from neighbours. Ten people were arrested and a loaded pistol, 65,000 kroner in various currencies, a roulette table, chips and playing cards were confiscated. "Lillehammer is really just a village and nothing much goes on without somebody telling us about it," a police spokesman said.

Hawks beat Bucks to stay atop standings

ATLANTA (R) — Mookie Blaylock scored 24 points and dished off 10 assists to help the Atlanta Hawks stay tied for the best record in the Eastern Conference with a 111-100 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks Friday.

Kevin Willis added 21 points for the Hawks, including 17 in the fourth quarter, when the Hawks took command. Willis also finished with a game-high 13 rebounds.

Ken Norman and Eric Murdock scored 22 points apiece to lead the Bucks. The victory enabled the Hawks to stay tied with the Chicago Bulls, who beat Washington Friday.

At Utah, Jay Humphries scored 23 points and David Benoit added a season-high 18 points and 14 rebounds to power the Utah Jazz to their fourth straight win, a 107-87 victory over the Phoenix Suns.

Charles Barkley scored 21 points to pace the Suns, who lost for only the second time in a six games since the All-Star break.

In Denver, Mahmoud Abdul Rauf scored 28 points to lead the Denver Nuggets to a 102-94 victory over the struggling New York Knicks.

Laphonso Ellis added 19 for Denver, which won for the fifth time in its last six games.

Patrick Ewing paced New York with 35 points but could not prevent the Knicks from their third consecutive loss.

In Orlando, Nick Anderson had 28 points and was one of four Orlando players to score at least 20 as the Magic beat the New Jersey Nets, 114-102, for their team-record sixth straight win.

Dennis Scott five of seven three-pointers and finished with 23 points for Orlando, which extended its winning streak against the Nets to five games.

In Los Angeles, Willie Anderson scored 27 of his season-high 33 points in the first half as the San Antonio Spurs completed their first-ever season sweep of the Los Angeles Lakers with a 126-110 victory.

The Spurs won all four games from the Lakers this season, sweeping Los Angeles for the first time since entering the NBA in 1976.

In Seattle, the Boston Celtics set a team record for futility as Seattle's Kendall Gill scored a season-high 25 points to give the Supersonics a 115-102 victory and deal the Celts their 11th straight defeat.

The loss broke a club record of 10 straight losses, set in January 1949.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAH HIRSCH

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BRIDGE IN THE FAST LANE

East-West vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ K J 7 3
♡ A K
◇ A K 3
♣ Q 6 a 4

WEST
♠ Q 10 5
♡ 5
◇ Q J 9 6 2
♣ K J 10 5

EAST
♠ 9 6 4 2
♡ Q a 6 4 2
◇ 10 a
♣ 9 3

SOUTH
♠ A a
♡ J 10 9 7 3
◇ 7 5 4
♣ A 7 2

The bidding:

North	East	South	West
2 NT	Pass	3 ◇	Dbl
Rdbl	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening lead: Queen of ◇

In the real world of bridge, this hand would have been played in an uneventful three no trump, probably scoring an overtrick or two. In the high-speed lane of duplicate, however, the bonus for making a doubled contract can turn an average score into a complete top, and this, in turn, can transform the mundane into the spectacular. Here's an example.

South's three diamonds was a transfer to hearts. West's double showed diamonds and North's redouble promised two stoppers in the suit. With three trumps and two aces, South decided to stick it out.

West found the best lead of the queen of diamonds. Declarer took the king and tried to cash the ace and king of hearts, but West ruffed the second round and reverted to the jack of diamonds to dummy's ace. South crossed to the ace of spades and took a winning finesse in the suit. After cashing the king, declarer ruffed the fourth spade. West overruffed, drew the last trump and, down to nothing but clubs, exited with a low club. Dummy's queen won, declarer returned to hand with the ace and led the jack of hearts. East won, but had to present declarer with a heart as the fulfilling trick.

Our eagle-eyed readers have no doubt spotted that West can execute a Merrimac Coup to sink the contract. After drawing the last trump, West must exit with the king of clubs. No matter how declarer wriggles, the defenders can come to two of the last four tricks for a one-trick set. Try it.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Shbeilat seen winning union election

AMMAN (J.T.) — Former Lower House of Parliament Deputy Laith Shbeilat was tipped to clench the Jordan Engineering Association presidency from incumbent Husni Abu Ghaida as the Jordan Times went to press Saturday. With a total of 6,600 votes cast Friday and Saturday, the turnout was the highest in the history of the association's elections, whose previous high was 4,400 votes cast in 1992. Early results indicated that six of the nine posts on the association's executive committee would almost certainly be held by members of the Muslim Brotherhood's White list. Mr. Shbeilat, an independent, is backed by the pan-Arab leftist coalition known as the Green List which is expected to win two of the association's nine seats.

Top FIS leaders moved out of jail

PARIS (R) — The two top leaders of Algeria's banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) have been transferred from military jail and put under house arrest on the eve of a possible amnesty, an Algerian newspaper reported on Saturday. The daily Liberte said FIS President Abbasi Madani and his deputy Ali Belhadj, jailed for 12 years in July 1992, had been moved out of the military prison in Blida south of the capital.

Branch Davidians cleared in murder trial

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — A jury acquitted all 11 Branch Davidians of murder and murder conspiracy Saturday, accepting defence lawyers' claims that cult members acted in self-defence when they gunned down four federal agents during last year's botched raid. All 11 defendants — six of whom were foreign-born — were charged with murder and murder conspiracy, which carry sentences of up to life in prison. Some also faced firearms charges. Four agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms were killed Feb. 28, 1993, in a shootout with David Koresh's followers as they tried to arrest the cult leader on weapons charges. Six Davidians were killed in the shootout with about 75 agents.

Fundamentalist hanged for Foda killing

CAIRO (AFP) — A militant was hanged in a prison here on Saturday for the murder of secular writer Farag Foda, officials said. Ashraf Abdul Shafi Ramadan was found guilty in December for the 1992 killing of the writer, who was an outspoken critic of Islamic fundamentalism. At his trial Ramadan insisted that others had carried out the killing but said he would go happily to the gallows. He had thanked God for granting him "the chance to become a martyr." Ramadan was the chief accused of 12 militants on trial for killing Foda, who was gunned down as he left his Cairo house with his son on June 7, 1992. He became the 30th Muslim militant to be hanged since last June. Another fundamentalist suspected of involvement in the Foda killing, Ashraf Al Sayed Ibrahim, was executed in July for attempting to assassinate Information Minister Safwat Al Sherif on April 20.

Iran, Germany reschedule debts

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran has rescheduled 4.5 billion Deutschemarks ($2.6 billion) in debts owed to German companies, a senior official said Saturday in Tehran. The agreement is likely to anger the United States, which had urged Germany to isolate Iran on grounds it sponsors international terrorism. Mahmoud Vaezi, deputy foreign minister for Euro-American affairs, told the Tehran Times newspaper that the payments — which had been due this year — would now be made between 1996 and the year 2000. Mr. Vaezi spoke to the newspaper on return from a three-day trip to Germany during which he met senior officials including Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

Walker named U.S. ambassador to Egypt

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton announced Friday that he had nominated Edward Walker as ambassador to Egypt. The 53-year-old career diplomat began at the State Department in 1967 and currently serves under the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. He was ambassador to the United Arab Emirates from 1989 to 1992. Mr. Walker has been posted in Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Tunisia, Egypt and Saudi Arabia and was part of the U.S. delegation to the Mideast peace talks from 1979 to 1981 under then-President Jimmy Carter.

Kuwait marks liberation anniversary

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwaitis beat drums, honked car horns and hung flags from skyscrapers on Saturday to celebrate the third anniversary of their liberation from Iraqi occupation. Revellers jammed central streets through the night. They watched fireworks and sprayed each other with canned foam to mark a U.S.-led coalition's 1991 liberation of the emirate. Kuwaitis, required to fast during daylight in the Holy Month of Ramadan, curtailed the celebrations before dawn. Some were expected to resume the revelry in the evening. The festivities were more subdued than in previous years following a police campaign against rowdy behaviour by youths.

'Iraq equips Iranian rebels with weapons'

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iraq has recently provided the Iranian rebel group, Mujahedeen-e-Khalq, with sophisticated weapons and other military equipment, an Iraqi opposition group charged Saturday. The Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCRI), quoted by the Iranian news agency, said four ground-to-air missile launching pads, Katyusha rockets, tanks and radar equipment were delivered to the Mujahedeen, the main armed opposition based in Iraq. The Mujahedeen, using helicopters, tanks, heavy artillery and anti-aircraft guns, held a four-day military exercise earlier this month in Iraq near the border with Iran.

Olympic security fears for Israelis

LILLEHAMMER (AFP) — Israel's three-man team at the Winter Olympics plans to take part in Sunday's closing ceremony despite security fears in the wake of the Hebron massacre. An Israeli spokesman, who asked to remain anonymous, told AFP on Saturday: "It won't change anything, we're here for sport not for politics. It's terrible, it's sad but you can't mix politics and sport." Lillehammer police spokesman Roger Andresen said: "The incidents in Hebron have been taken into account when planning the last two days of the games and of the Israeli delegation."

Quake hits Iran; no casualty reports

NICOSIA (R) — A new earthquake, the 13th in the last four days, hit southeastern Iran on Saturday near the border with Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Iranian news agency IRNA said. It said the earthquake, measuring 5.7 on the Richter scale, hit areas near Zabol, a town close to the point where Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan meet in Sistan-Baluchestan province. It did not report any damage or casualties.

Somali leaders holding talks in Egypt

NAIROBI (AFP) — Self-styled Somali President Ali Mahdi Mohammad was in Cairo on Saturday for talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on the Somali crisis, ore Al Mahdi Radio Mogadishu reported in [illegible] monitored here. The radio quoted Mr. Al Mahdi as saying that his visit to Cairo was at the invitation of the Egyptian president, who is current chairman of the Organisation of Africa Unity. Mr. Mubarak is meeting the heads of Somalia's 15 political organisations to try to resolve the Somali crisis, the radio said. After the Cairo visit, Mr. Al Mahdi is also scheduled to visit Kenya to speak to Somalis living in its western neighbour, the radio added.

Leaders of anti-Yeltsin rebellion freed from jail

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Leaders of the October 1993 armed revolt against President Boris Yeltsin walked free from Lefortovo prison Saturday five months after being jailed, released under an amnesty approved by parliament last week.

Former Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi, wearing a long, grey beard and dressed in a military uniform, emerged from the main entrance of the jail where he and several other Yeltsin foes have been awaiting trial on charges of "organising mass disturbances."

About 200 people waving red banners and shouting "Rutskoi for president," cheered as the leader of the rebellion, accompanied by his wife Ludmila and son, shook hands and thanked his supporters.

"I was with you and will remain with you until the end," Mr. Rutskoi, 47, quoted by Interfax news agency told the crowd before being whisked away in a navy blue Mercedes. "The main thing now is to remain calm," he added.

Earlier, former Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov, 51, and Albert Makashov, who led the attack on the Ostankino broadcast centre on Oct. 3, were discretely released from a side door of the prison and taken away in a car, eyewitnesses said.

The amnesty prompted Prosecutor General Alexei Kazannik to resign Saturday in protest over the move which he denounced as "one of the most shameful acts of Russian parliamentarism."

The release of the rebel leaders was viewed as a slap in the face for Mr. Yeltsin who had vowed to punish the organisers of the two days of riot violence "to the strictest extent of the law" for having "raised their hands against Moscow, against sacred things."

Mr. Yeltsin dispatched Saturday presidential aide Georgi Saratov to hold talks with Speaker Ivan Rybkin on the decision, ITAR-TASS reported, but the move appeared to come too late.

Mr. Kazannik said he felt he had no legal right to defy parliament. "Neither could he bring himself to release men he called the "instigators" of "murders and pogroms."

The only choice left, he said, was to offer his resignation to Mr. Yeltsin.

"This act of political amnesty will forever remain a shameful page in Russian parliamentary history," Mr. Kazannik, a 52-year-old legal scholar, said.

His deputy, Vladimir Kravtsov, said he was assuming responsibility for carrying out the amnesty approved this week by the lower house of parliament, the Duma.

Mr. Khasbulatov and Mr. Rutskoi led parliament opposition to Mr. Yeltsin's economic reforms and later headed the legislators who refused to obey the president's order to disband and declared Mr. Rutskoi — a hero of the Aghan war — Russia's president.

The tense standoff, which began in September, turned into street violence when armed hardliners, led by Mr. Makashov and others, attempted to storm government buildings and the main T.V. station in Moscow on Oct. 3.

A day later, Mr. Yeltsin sent tanks and troops to crush the defiant lawmakers. At least 140 people have died in the violence and hundreds were wounded.

A crowd of about 500 supporters and curious onlookers gathered outside the walls of Lefortovo, a forbidding former KGB prison in central Moscow.

Palestinians help an injured comrade following heavy clashes on Saturday with Israeli soldiers in Arab East Jerusalem (AFP photo)

Settlers in Hebron display no remorse over massacre

HEBRON, Occupied West Bank (R) — Jewish seminary students kept their fingers on the triggers of their snbmachinegnns while they prayed, ate and chatted with soldiers outside the Cave of the Patriarchs.

They smiled, they laughed.

They showed no signs of remorse.

Inside there were pools of blood on the floor of the Biblical shrine, holy to both Jews and Muslims.

Just a few hours earlier, a fellow Jewish settler had gone into the mosque which forms part of the Cave of the Patriarchs and opened fire with an automatic rifle on hundreds of Arabs kneeling at dawn prayers during the Holy Month of Ramadan.

Baruch Goldstein, a 42-year-old doctor from the nearby settlement of Kiryat Arba, had slain dozens of Arab worshippers in the worst massacre in 26 years of conflict between Israel and Arabs over occupied Palestinian land.

In the wake of the carnage, the scene was chilling.

About 30 young Jews who studied at a seminary in the cave complex sat in the sunshine and munched oranges and sandwiches.

They wore the blue-and-white skullcaps that are part of their Jewish heritage. Like many Israeli settlers allowed to bear arms, they had guns slung over their shoulders. Some kept their fingers on the triggers.

They embraced Israeli soldiers who had cordoned off the mosque after the bloodshed.

Children dressed in leopard and witch costumes for the Jewish holiday of Purim, which fell on Friday, milled around.

Up the road, the streets of Hebron had fallen quiet with the shock of the massacre. The [illegible] men mourning at the houses of the dead or walking back from funerals at the cemetery.

Asked if he condemned the killings, settlers leader Noam Arnon told Reuters:

"This is the result of an accumulation of incidents here. You cannot take it out of context. The Arabs are constantly attacking Jews here. Jnst yesterday, we were praying here and the Arabs were shouting 'Massacre the Jews'."

Hebron has long been wracked by violence between Arab and Jew. Some of the most extreme Jewish settlers live in enclaves in the middle of the city of 110,000 Arabs.

Palestinians frequently complain about armed settlers marching through their markets, overturning vegetable stands, vandalising property, and attacking the Arab inhabitants.

In the heart of the city sits the Cave of the Patriarchs, comprising the mosque, the cave where Biblical patriarchs are buried, and a hall for Jewish prayer.

The entrance to the shrine is dominated by a Jewish seminary with Israeli flags fluttering from the rooftop and a giant sign in Hebrew and English — "Jewish Hebron settlers gift shop." The shop, which was once burned in a Palestinian petrol bomb attack, is encased in wire mesh.

The army barred journalists from entering the mosque after the massacre. Carloads of Arab municipal officials and the Muslim caretakers of holy places were allowed in to investigate. They left with dark expressions as they passed the group of settlers.

Mr. Arnon said he believed Goldstein was distraught over the double killing in December of an Israeli father and son, settlers from the Hebron area, and was motivated by revenge. Goldstein, a doctor, bad treated the two.

"I blame the government for spilling tbe blood of Jews. We warned them it could cause a counter-explosion," Mr. Arnon said.

"We hone this serves as a [illegible] stop cooperating with the enemy and to provide security so all the Jews can pray here witbout fear."

AFP ADDS: Another settler who refused to be named compared Goldstein with the biblical Samson who fought the Philistines.

Goldstein's brother-in-law, Moshe Ben Yossef, said the slaughter was "a magnificent present for the Purim festival," a holiday which marks the deliverance of Jews from a massacre in ancient Persia.

The Kach movement and Kahana Hai, two far-right anti-Arab groups who lay claim to the heritage of racist Rabbi Meir Kahana, who was murdered in November 1990, took up the same theme hailing Goldstein as a "saint and martyr."

Rabbi Moshe Levinger, who founded Kyriat Arba, turned the blame for the carnage on the government accusing it of "being soft on Arab terrorism which pushed Dr. Goldstein into despair."

All the main right-wing nationalist parties who support the settlers nonetheless condemned the killing.

"It is a sickening and crazy crime. Jewish terrorism cannot be an answer for Arab terrorism," declared opposition Likud party leader Benjamin Netanyahu.

"But the settlers must not suffer from the consequences when they are already the target of Arab terrorism."

Right-wing parties were to hold a meeting Saturday evening to decide what course to take in a bid not to harm the future of Israeli settlement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin held a series of consultations with ministers, police and army chiefs Saturday to work out measures to take to stem the violence, officials said.

He was reviewing several proposals ranging from an official inquiry into the carnage, banning extremist settlers' leaders from the occupied territories and disarming the settlers.

[illegible] defence minister was due to report to the weekly cabinet meeting on Sunday after some ministers urged "severe" action against the settlers.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, however, ruled out disarming the settlers.

Northern Yemenis say south planning a major offensive

SANAA (Agencies) — Southern troops are preparing for a major offensive to capture the strategic town of Qaataba, a spokesman of the northern General People's Congress (GPC) party charged Saturday.

"The YSP (Yemen Socialist Party) has massed troops and heavy weapons near the former border," which used to divide the former North and South Yemen republics before they united in May 1990, the spokesman said.

"Their forces are getting ready to capture the strategic town of Qaataba, whose occupation would allow them to enter Ibb," a city deeper inside the northern region, he charged.

The YSP "seeks to trigger a full-blown war," he charged.

Reuter, in a Dubai-datelined report, quoted oil industry sources in the area as saying South Yemenis had sent missiles, tanks and heavy guns to the vital oil province.

The arrival of the armour was the latest spiral in tension between Mr. Saleh and his Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beidh, whose rival forces have been fighting for a week in a southern province.

The sources quoted by Reuter said tanks, long-range guns and ground-to-air missiles arrived on Friday and Saturday near the town of Ataq, capital of the oil-producing province of Shabwa about 160 kilometres northeast of Aden.

Mr. Saleh's GPC — which ruled the former North Yemen — and Mr. Beidh's YSP — which ruled the south — decided to share power upon unification, but they have not merged armies.

The GPC spokesman accused the YSP of sending several tanks, 37 Russian-made armoured vehicles and nearly thirty 36-millime e guns to Al A'wabel, Sbi'b Al Khanaq and Jahaf provinces, adjoining the former border.

The southern party on Friday distributed 3,000 light weapons to its militiamen in these provinces, be added.

The YSP has also bought from Bulgaria several fighter aircraft that landed in the past few days in the southern airports of Aden, capital of the former South Yemen, and Al Rayan, he said.

Tens of tonnes of military uniforms, tents and blankets were unloaded lately in the airport of Hadhramaut province, 500 kilometres northeast of Aden, he said.

Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beidh have been locked in a political showdown since August, when Mr. Beidh refused to take up his duties as vice president in the capital Sanaa, in the north, demanding major economic, political and security reforms.

A reconciliation agreement signed on Feb. 20 by Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beidh in Amman has failed so far to end the crisis as nearly 20 soldiers have been killed in clashes between rival army units since then.

Yemeni Minister of Defence Haytham Qassem Al Taher, a southerner, said Friday the military commission in charge of implementing the security measures agreed upon in Amman has failed to stop escalation.

Clashes between the northern Amaliqah brigade and the southern Wahda brigade have been going on in Abyan since Sunday.

The Amaliqah brigade was stationed in the south following the 1990 union.

A committee headed by Deputy Chief of Staff Colonel Ali Mohammad Salah went to Abyan on Sunday to separate the factions and persuade the Wahda brigade to return to Hadramaut province in the south.

But the spokesman said in a statement on Friday that the committee bad returned to the capital Sanaa "aftyer failing in its mission to get the Wahda troops back to their base."

Moscow acknowledges Ames was Russian mole

MOSCOW (Agencies) — A top Russian general effectively acknowledged on Saturday that Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) veteran Aldrich Ames, who was arrested in the United States on Monday on spying charges, had indeed been working for Moscow.

"He worked there and worked for us. He defended our interests because he exposed spies who were pumping Russian secrets to the United States," ITAR-TASS news agency quoted Lieutenant-General Mikhail Kolesnikov, chief of the armed forces' general staff, as saying.

Gen. Kolesnikov's comment was the first from Moscow to touch on Mr. Ames' activities.

Mr. Ames, 52, a CIA officer for more than 31 years and a former head of its counter-intelligence section, and his wife were arrested on Monday and subsequently charged with spying for Moscow since 1985 in return for payoffs of more than $1.5 million.

Washington on Friday expelled a Russian diplomat, whom it identified as Moscow's chief intelligence officer in the United States, and threatened further action.

Moscow has called for the Ames affair to be resolved quietly. But an official of the foreign intelligence service said on Friday his office bad "compromising materials against some U.S. diplomats and Russian citizens who cooperate witb American special services" and hinted that "under certain circumstances" Moscow could use these materials.

Another senior Russian general taunted Washington over its indignation at the espionage affair, stating that Russia should be complaining from the loss of the key spy.

"This spy worked for us. He unmasked our spies, Soviet spies that revealed state secrets to governments abroad," commented General Yevgeny Podkolzhin.

"So was there a prejudice caused to the United States?" He asked "No. But for us, it was a loss of a major advantage," Gen. Podkolzhin, the commander of airborne forces, said.

Gen. Kolesnikov brushed aside suggestions of a link between the espionage affair and Russia's diplomatic initiatives in Bosnia.

Russian media has reported that Washington might be attempting to embarrass Russia with the espionage case in retaliation for its opposition to the threat of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation airstrikes in Bosnia.

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COLUMN

British police probe palace break-in

LONDON (R) — British police promised a thorough investigation after thieves broke into the private London apartments of Prince Charles in the third major breach of royal security this year. Cufflinks and tiepins belonging to the prince were stolen in the break-in at St James's Palace, which is also home to other members of the royal family. The 45-year-old heir to the throne was on a skiing holiday in the Swiss resort of Klosters at the time. The theft was discovered early Friday by a member of the prince's staff. British police said they would carry out "a full and rigorous investigation into both the burglary and the circumstances surrounding it" and would send a report to Home Secretary (Interior Minister) Michael Howard soon. Police declined to give details of the burglary but said the front of the palace was covered in builder's scaffolding. "At this early stage it's believed this may have played a part" a spokesman said. Former London Police Commander Terry O'Connell said the fact that the prince was away may also have played a part. "I don't think security was as high as it would have been had be been there," he said in a television interview. Britain's royalty-obsessed tabloids Saturday criticised the weak links in the royal security cordon that allowed the burglars in. The Daily Mirror described the break-in as "an astonishing new security blunder" while the Daily Mail said the burglary exposed "an alarming new gap in royal security."

U.S. to consider banning most cigarettes

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States is considering a ban on any cigarettes strong enough to get people hooked on nicotine, according to a top health official wbo said that the substance could be classified as a drug. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner David Kessler said tbat nicotine's addictive nature could give it the legal definition of a drug and has asked Congress for direction on the matter. He also said there was mounting proof that cigarette manufacturers were deliberately increasing nicotine levels in order to get smokers addicted. "This evidence makes it clear that tobacco companies in America are nothing less than our most notorious drug cartel," said Representative Richard Durbin of Illinois, who said Congress should look into the matter. The FDA has not made a decision on the classification, but if it does Mr. Kessler wrote that it could lead "ultimately, removal from the market of tobacco products containing nicotine at levels that cause or satisfy addiction." Mr. Kessler's remarks are the latest in a series of steps to get Americans to kick the habit, a campaign President Bill Clinton, whose wife Hillary banned smoking from the White House, supports. Thursday, the Surgeon General issued a report decrying the number of teenage smokers and several fast-food chains have recently banned smoking from their restaurants.

Stay in bed and live longer — Chinese doctor

BEIJING (R) — People who happily hop out of bed first thing in the morning are likely to get exactly what they deserve — a major heart attack, according to a Chinese doctor. "The waking moment when one first cracks an eyelid is the moment of greatest risk for cardiac arrest even sudden death," Huang Guoxiong of the Liaoning Chinese Medical College told the official Xinhua News Agency Saturday. "Therefore, after first awakening idle about in bed rather than sbow off your hard-working spirit." Dr. Huang said years of study had proved to him the value of loafing around in bed and the dangers of springing to one's feet to greet the new day. "When one hop s out of bed immediately after awakening, even more burden is laid on the heart," Dr. Huang said that a far better way of waking up involved a lengthy lie-in and a slow gathering of energy.